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The Editors
HOW NOT TO
PAY THE PUMPER

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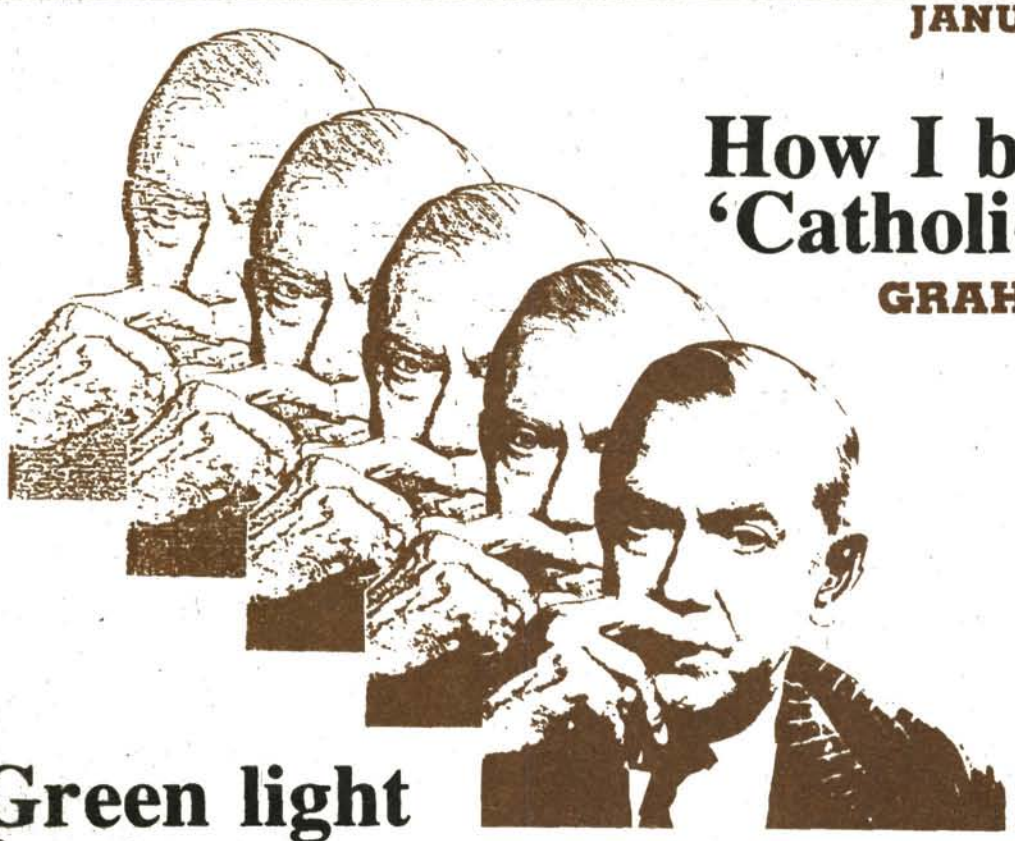

How I became a 'Catholic writer'
GRAHAM GREENE

Green light for terror in El Salvador
RICHARD ALAN WHITE

Going straight
ROBERT JOE STOUT

ALSO: JOHN GARVEY ON THE FUNDAMENTALIST-HUMANIST COMPLEX. NICOLAUS MILLS ON EDWARD HOPPER. COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR. ON 'RAGING BULL.' FRANK McCONNELL ON WAUGH & GREENE. JOHN AHERN ON TERRORISM.

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Correspondence

Egg on our face

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: Politicians are used to being misquoted but, as you do in your editorial, "Life After Reagan," [Nov. 21], to attribute to the Caterpillar the words of the Egg (Humpty Dumpty) cannot go uncorrected. ROBERT ZICKLIN

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: There appears to be a serious error in the recent editorial "Life After Reagan" [Nov. 21]. As any of my high-school friends could point out, it was not the Caterpillar in *Alice in Wonderland* but Humpty Dumpty in *Alice Through the Looking Glass* who claimed that words mean what we say they mean.

" 'When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.'" (Chapter VI).

I hope *Commonweal* is not slipping in literary matters.

GABRIELLE STEINFELS

*Oh, well. As the Red Queen says (*Through the Looking Glass, *Chapter IX): "It's too late to correct it . . . : when you've once said a thing, that fixes it, and you must take the consequences."*

THE EDITORS

A rare experience

Palo Alto, Cal.

To the Editors: If my description of the impact of the evening of Puerto Rican music and dancing at the Theology in the Americas Conference came across to Peter Steinfels as naive or sentimental ["Exchange of Views, Nov. 21], I failed as a writer.

The experience itself was no such thing. The conference at that time was rife with hostility, mistrust, and anger on all levels—race, politics, sex. At most other conferences where I've been, such divisions and hostilities remain unmitigated. It was a rare experience for me to be in that place with its music and dance, and find myself becoming able to see some of those that I most mistrusted ideologically, as human beings and friends again. This may sound trivial and trite. As an experience for me it was not.

SYDNEY THOMSON BROWN

Our own cosmology

San Francisco, Cal.

To the Editors: David Toolan's article depicting psychology's theological quantum jump [Oct. 10] was excellent, timely and insightful. The opening quote from Owen Barfield carried a shock—the shock of simple truth, an epiphany, if you will, that re-presented itself time and again during my rereading of the article. However, I felt in some ways Toolan's analysis did not always sustain his original insight.

Why is it so hard to see the reason for the affinity of the new science and psychology with "Hindu and Buddhist cosmologies and psychologies"? Oriental religion, unlike Western religion, did not (as Toolan rightly points out) surrender its world view to the seemingly victorious Weltanschauung of modern scientism. Hinduism retained its cosmology intact. Western religion was not so fortunate. There is no Christian cosmology today that is genuinely distinct from the world view of modern science which presents a soulless cosmos of Cartesian extension and "the dispiriting logic of cog-psyches caught in the cosmic machine," as Toolan puts it. What passes for cosmology today is more a "cosmography" than a true cosmology, which always has spiritual elements that point to the immanent and transcendent Presence of God. A genuine cosmology, which Christianity once possessed, describes the universe according to a *living symbolism*. Only symbolism and analogy can take account of the invisible spiritual *qualities* of the real cosmos, which can never be reduced to numbers or formulae. Now that the new physics is beginning to undermine the entire Cartesian-Newtonian edifice, Christian theology, which surrendered its traditional cosmology in the attempt to be "up to date," is in the embarrassing position of holding a bag whose epistemological and cosmological contents are largely incomplete and obsolete, discarded by the very science to which theology has surrendered her mind, if not her soul.

I disagree with Toolan's implication that when psychology and science have dug deep enough in the "mine shafts of oriental religion," they will miraculously come to their senses and return to their Western roots. They have already looked to Christianity and found nothing to support their new discoveries. They are mistaken, but it is not entirely their fault. The "broken link between the West's contemplative tradition and academic knowledge" must be reforged by Christians first, not by transpersonal psychology. Christian theology must not stand around like a temporarily abandoned bride waiting for her charms to be rediscovered by a temporarily faithless suitor. A genuinely Christian cosmology must be restored and upheld with vigor—a powerful vision of the Logos by whom "all things consist" (Col. 1:17) that will not change with fickle science, but that will always illuminate. All the elements of a truly cosmic Christianity are already present in the tradition, in Aquinas and Bonaventure, as Toolan mentions, in the Fathers, in Pseudo-Dionysius, and many others. It seems a shame that Christian theology has such an inferiority complex in regard to Western science that it has to wait for the traditional insights of Christianity to be "validated" by secular authorities before it will boldly proclaim their timeless truth.

VINCENT ROSSI
Director General
Holy Order of MANS

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HOW NOT TO PAY THE PUMPER

SENATE SCRUTINY of those nominated for Cabinet posts in the Reagan administration is likely to dominate the news in the immediate future. Mr. Reagan's choice of Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr. alone guarantees newspaper headlines when the hearings reach their peak. But the new president would be ill-advised to allow such spectacular issues to distract his attention from more long-range and permanent matters, important as the post of secretary of state is. Of these crucial long-range issues that cry out for immediate attention, the economy may well be the foremost, but the energy issue is nothing to be passed over lightly either.

Throughout his presidential campaign, Mr. Reagan brushed aside energy issues, indicating that shortages could be overcome simply by unleashing private enterprise. And it is obviously true that if the United States could produce more oil at home, it would reduce our reliance on foreign oil. However, even Mr. Reagan's most devoted followers in the industry really do not think this is likely. Domestic oil production in the lower forty-eight states declined from 11.3 million barrels a day in 1970 to 8.7 million today. Even with Alaskan oil added in, total production is now one million barrels a day less than it was ten years ago. American oilfields are now being depleted, and it is probable that they will produce fifteen percent less, not more, by 1990.

Mr. Reagan's position on energy provided a sharp contrast between him and Mr. Carter. Jimmy Carter's contribution on energy was not this or that detail of legislation he proposed but his insistence that the oil shortage was real, not imaginary, and that it could not be solved simply by wishing it away. Twice in the last seven years the U.S. oil and gas supply has been disrupted by upheavals in the Middle East. Congress finally gave the president the right to ration gasoline, but only in an extreme emergency, and it is highly unlikely that Congress would authorize a rationing system under any other circumstances.

Reagan campaign talk to the contrary, the United States remains extremely vulnerable to any break or reduction in the oil supply. Nearly one-third of the world's total supply of oil moves by sea through the Persian Gulf and the Straits of Hormuz at its mouth. Any interruption in this flow for more than a few days would create a disaster for the world's oil-centered economy, including that of the United States. Right at this moment, any serious expansion of the Iraqui-Iranian war could confront Ronald Reagan with an oil-gasoline crisis before his Oval Office chair is even warm. Reducing our dependence on foreign oil is essential, and this makes the case for a substantial conservation tax on gasoline stronger than ever.

America still imports almost half the oil it uses, for which our weekly bill runs just under $1.5 billion. One out of nine barrels of oil used in the entire world daily is burned as gasoline on U.S. highways. Of the oil imported, nearly ninety percent—almost seven million barrels a day—is burned as gasoline. This year foreign oil will

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cost us some $90 billion, more than the combined net assets of I.B.M., General Electric, General Motors, and Ford. Deputy Energy Secretary John C. Sawhill estimates that we are paying fifty percent more than last year and that this amounts to about $400 annually for each and every U.S. citizen. Three years ago gasoline sold for about sixty cents a gallon. It is now running about $1.30, and estimates are that it may be close to $2 a gallon by the end of the new year. What this amounts to is an OPEC sales tax on American consumption. In 1972 that tax amounted to one-half of one percent of the gross national product. By 1979 it grew to two percent. Last year it doubled again to four percent. That means that Americans are paying OPEC four percent of all the goods and services this nation produces—a figure that the *New York Times* calculated comes to only slightly less than the total amount Americans spend on national defense or Social Security. Thus those who oppose an American conservation tax on gasoline are not simply voting against further price increases, as they like to imagine; they are giving silent assent to an increased tax payable to the OPEC nations.

Italy has a gasoline tax of almost $2 a gallon; France one of $1.67. In contrast, gasoline taxes in the United States are measured in pennies; indeed, the average U.S. gasoline tax, state and federal, amounts to less than ten percent of the average gasoline tax of France, Italy, and West Germany. Estimates are that raising the U.S. gasoline tax by, say, fifty cents would cut consumption by ten percent immediately and by as much as forty percent in a decade. That would mean an immediate saving of 700,000 barrels of oil a day and almost three million barrels daily in ten years. Such a reduction would for a start head off further OPEC price increases by creating a buyer's market.

Would consumption actually go down, as the experts predict, if prices went up? Skeptics were initially dubious, but so far the decline in gasoline consumption accompanying higher prices has been even more marked than was predicted. Although there are several million more cars on the road than a year ago, driving and gasoline consumption are significantly below last year's levels. Gasoline consumption definitely responds to increased costs.

Up to now Congress has shown itself gun-shy of a gasoline tax in any form, even President Carter's modest ten-cent proposal, on the supposition that the public would not stand for such a move. Clearly the only way that a gasoline conservation tax might become politically possible is if Ronald Reagan were to get firmly behind it and if it were emphasized that the total tax would not be used for general revenues or to balance the budget, but would be returned directly to the public in the form of Social Security tax cuts or income tax rebates or, as some have suggested, in refunds of state sales taxes.

Just suppose Congress had been foresighted enough to impose such a fifty-cent tax on gasoline four or five years ago when the energy crisis was first hitting us. Gasoline consumption would have been cut by 600,000 barrels a day, as it has been in the past year. The price of gasoline would probably be near or a little less than it is now, and tax rebates of $50 billion a year would be going to the American public instead of to the OPEC nations.

We can't set the clock back to 1975, but it is still not too late to help ourselves. More than thirty percent of our imported oil comes from the Persian Gulf area, and the turbulence in Iran and its war with Iraq are good indications of the possibilities of trouble in that region—indeed in the entire Middle East. Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia—in all these countries major threats of one sort or another represent a constant menace to continued oil production. If we are not to be caught flatfooted by another major oil crisis, it is imperative that the United States reduce its oil dependence. That task is not hopeless. A year ago the U.S. imported 7.8 million barrels of oil a day. This year the figure is 6.7 million barrels, fourteen percent less. Higher prices reduce consumption. Thus Mr. Carter's suggested oil import fee of ten cents a gallon would have been a step in the right direction; although it did not go far enough, estimates of savings resulting from even that small a tax amounted to 100,000 barrels a day. Just imagine what a substantial, Reagan-blessed tax could do.

Now that the campaign is over, President-elect Reagan should take time to read something perhaps Campaigner Reagan did not have time for—the forecast made some weeks ago by the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment. In sober language, its authors admit the difficulty of such predictions, but their best forecasts expect that there will in fact be little or no increase in total world oil supply by the end of the century. On the other hand there will certainly be a substantial growth in energy demand, especially from the developing nations. As for U.S. productivity, the O.T.A. estimate ranges from less than one-half of today's level to a high of one-third less—hardly any support for the position Mr. Reagan took during the campaign.

By inaction in the face of the oil problem, this country sends a message to the OPEC nations and to the other Western consuming countries that we are incapable of facing up to and dealing with the energy problem. This is something Mr. Reagan might consider if he wants to project an image of a strong and resolute America. The time to act in this matter is now, before we are confronted with an emergency. A substantial tax should be imposed on gasoline, with detailed provisions for rebate to the public, and the oil thereby saved should be placed in the national strategic petroleum reserve—a reserve that now contains only 91 million barrels of oil, about enough to make up for a loss of two weeks' worth of imports in the event of a Middle Eastern crisis.

Conservation is our only hope of reducing national reliance on imported oil. By various presidential statements and by sending American equipment and military men to assist in the air defense of Saudi Arabia, we have signaled that we are willing to risk war for the sake of oil. Are we equally willing to suffer the financial burden of a gasoline tax in order to reduce dependence on that troubled region—and to make military intervention less necessary? And will Ronald Reagan show himself realistic enough to forget his campaign position on energy and face up to the hard facts?

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STANDS FOR WHAT?

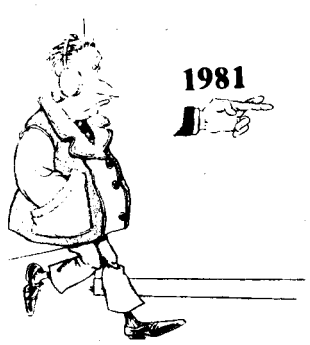
Michael Kirwan is a young man who spent a couple of years helping at the Catholic Worker's St. Joseph House in New York. Two years ago, having returned to his native Washington, D.C., he began taking soup, bread, and tea to the men and women living on the sidewalk vents around the State Department building, and he began giving the men a place to clean up and to stay in his own apartment. Last August, he established St. Benedict's House of Hospitality at 1638 4th St., N.W., in an impoverished area of Washington, where about twenty men from the streets find shelter and where (when he isn't at the full-time job he holds to pay the bills) Michael Kirwan organizes the provision of soup and food for the people on the heating grates.

When we returned from the New Year's holiday, there was a letter from Michael Kirwan at the office. "This is not a letter written in response to any *Commonweal* article or editorial," he began. "It is simply written in frustration and with some anger. At least I'll feel a little better knowing I've shared my thoughts and perhaps given rise to some sense of indignation in others.

"It is incredibly sad to watch the Inaugural stands being built at the Capitol and the reviewing stands being built at the White House and to think that we would do that for the few minutes of the Inaugural ceremony and the maximum one hour of the Inaugural parade. Sad because we are outfitting these stands with plush seats and glass enclosures and heating systems to protect the officials against the elements — in the process spending hundreds of thousands of dollars — while at the same time we ignore the homeless poor who will be lying exactly two blocks away on the heating vents trying to keep warm. We also ignore the homeless families who in this coldest of seasons are forced to spend their nights and days on the streets as reported by the *Washington Post* on December 15, 1980. And we ignore the many hundreds of homeless men and women crowding the public shelters night after night for want of a place to go for the rest of their lives.

"Where is our love in this the season of that greatest example of Love? Must we always deify our public officials and raise them, literally and figuratively, above the level of the common folk they are supposed to represent? What is wrong with the president-elect standing on the sidewalk with his guests like the rest of the citizenry to take the oath of office and review the parade?

"As long as they are going to take two months to build these shelters for the elite, why then rip them down after those few minutes of official use? Why not leave them standing to house the poor and homeless as a continuing reminder to all of us of our miguided priorities and appalling lack of sensitivity? We here at the Catholic Worker might also have another place where we could direct the many that come to our home every night seeking shelter and warmth and for whom we have no more room. Maybe it might even be a fitting memorial to the individuals who froze to death last week, one of them, ironically, on the steps of a church. At least such a shelter — and such a reminder — might delay the fate for those they left behind."



Report from Ireland

AN 'IRISH' SOLUTION

A BITTER PILL FOR THE BISHOPS?

"AN IRISH SOLUTION to an Irish problem" was how a former Irish Health Minister described a bill introduced in Dáil Éireann (the lower House of the Irish Parliament) to legalize the sale of contraceptives. He meant, of course, that circumstances in Ireland necessitated a particular approach to changing the previous law prohibiting the importation, display, or sale of contraceptives. What he overlooked was that the word "Irish" sometimes has an unflattering connotation — meaning "bungled," "inappropriate," "straining credulity."

The Minister, Mr. Charles J. Haughey, has been Taoiseach (Prime Minister) since December 1979. His bill was enacted in 1979 and the regulations implementing it came into effect on November 1 last.

The parliamentary moves to remove the prohibition on the sale of contraceptives became necessary in 1973 when the Supreme Court ruled in favor of a married woman, advised against further pregnancies, who pleaded that it was unconstitutional to deprive her of the right to import contraceptives for her own use. The political parties, however, ducked the issue because of the Catholic church's opposition, the hierarchy having opposed the legislation, predicting that the contraceptive mentality would inevitably lead to divorce, abortion, and euthanasia.

For seven years, an anomalous situation obtained. The law forbidding the import and sale of contraceptives remained on the statute books, even though it had been declared unconstitutional. But it was ignored in practice, at least as far as the import of contraceptives in sufficient numbers for personal use was concerned. Meantime, family planning clinics had been established in main cities and towns. These supplied advice and also provided contraceptives of all kinds in return for "voluntary donations" to keep within the law.

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The new legislation provides that contraceptives can be sold on a doctor's prescription only for bona fide family planning purposes—a genuflection in the direction of confining them to married persons only. Prescriptions must be for a maximum of one year and may be dispensed only by a pharmaceutical chemist who keeps open shop for dispensing prescriptions. Importers of contraceptives must obtain annual licenses from the Minister for Health. Intra-uterine devices are banned because they are judged to be abortifacients. Family planning clinics are allowed to operate an informational, advisory, and consultation service only with the Minister's consent, except for those clinics providing a "natural family planning service" only. Other clinics must prove they provide advice on natural methods before they are given ministerial consent. No licenses will be given to clinics providing an abortion referral service. Advertising for family planning services will be permitted, but not for actual contraceptive devices or products. One of the most controversial clauses is that providing that family planning clinics will be able to sell contraceptives only if they employ a dispensing chemist, thus depriving them of the revenue, especially from mail orders, which enabled them to operate.

Some groups such as pro-contraception organizations and university students' organizations are defying the law by selling contraceptives direct and the Irish Family Planning Association is considering a court challenge to the new law's constitutionality. An Association spokesman said that the clinics provided the only training for doctors in family planning methods: some one hundred and twenty general practitioners have so far been trained in the techniques. It is to these clinics that the Regional Health Boards refer doctors and nurses for training and if the clinics have to close for lack of revenue, the only training facility will disappear.

In a statement coinciding with the introduction of the new regulations, the Catholic bishops said that "no state legislation can alter this moral teaching" that contraceptive intercourse is contrary to God's design. Addressing doctors and chemists, the bishops said that cooperation in the wrong act of another is generally unlawful and that "prescribing or supplying material for contraceptive purposes is clearly a form of cooperation." They added that doctors must put the integrity of their conscience before any other consideration: "with confidence in their high sense of responsibility, we ask them to give a clear witness to their opposition to contraceptive practices."

At the same time, reports circulated that members of branches of the Knights of Columbanus, a conservative lay Catholic movement, were bringing pressure on local doctors, nurses, and chemists to refuse to operate the new legislation, and Dr. Cahal Daly, Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise, said that if there was moral pressure on doctors, it was created by the moral law and not by the bishops. At first, there were forecasts that a majority of doctors and fifty to eighty percent of chemists would follow the bishops' line and refuse to prescribe or supply contraceptives. There was panic buying of contraceptives in the week before the new regulations came into effect. A few weeks later, however, it was reported that most doctors and eighty percent of chemists had indicated their agreement to operate under the new regulations. The fact that doctors can charge four to five pounds ($8-$10) per prescription and chemists have a mark-up of fifty to seventy percent on sales may have influenced their attitude. A public opinion survey, issued around the same time, showed that sixty-four percent of Irish women favored making contraceptives available, though thirty-nine percent wanted them restricted to married couples.

It will be three or four months before the workability of new regulations is established. The indications are, however, that the bill's aim was to produce legislation which, despite its "Irish" character, would be initially accepted by Parliament and people in the belief that once in force the operation of the law would become more liberal in practice. This, indeed, may be the real "Irish" character of the new regulations.

DESMOND FISHER

(Desmond Fisher reports regularly from Ireland.)

Of several minds: *John Garvey*

MADE FOR EACH OTHER

THE FUNDAMENTALIST-HUMANIST COMPLEX

WHEN THE ELECTION was over and right-wing fundamentalists were celebrating Reagan's victory and the defeat of liberal congressmen, a new moan was heard all over America. Real conservatives I can live with, liberals were saying; it's these bright-eyed saved folk who push for prayer in public schools and the teaching of Genesis in science class—they *worry* me. There's a point to be made there, all right: a few of the Lord's goons appeared on television the day after the election to warn Reagan and other conservative victors that they had better be true to the cause, or else. They aimed a special warning shot across George Bush's bow. For some reason the right thinks of Bush (the only man so highly placed who has said publicly that a nuclear war is winnable, no nervous Nellie he) as a liberal, perhaps because he whines a little when he talks and has been seen jogging.

The religious right does pose a problem. They are organized and simple-minded. *Virtue, the Magazine of Christian Womanhood*, for example, features articles with titles like *Lord! Please Potty Train Jimmy!* Beth, the Christian featured in this story, turns that task over to Jesus, but not without reflecting on a non-Christian neighbor. From her perspective as one of the saved, Beth knows that "although her neighbor breezed through potty training, there

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would be other times when her strength and patience would be spent and she would be without hope." I can see Beth all ready to move in with a knowing smile, and perhaps a tract, when her neighbor's husband leaves her or her child dies.

It would be unfair to bring up this particular example of bad taste if it were not politically significant. Beth's version of "who is my neighbor?" brings to mind the statement of the Reverend Bailey Smith, who said before the nation what Beth knows in her heart: God does not hear the prayers of non-Christians, specifically (in Smith's version) of Jews. It is the obvious civil right of Bailey Smith to believe in a God less decent than most human beings, a God who hears the prayers of a born-again executioner and ignores the prayers of Anne Frank, and it is even his right to try to influence public policy. But it is also our duty to oppose the worst efforts of people for whom the ways of the Lord are about as mysterious and subtle as a sign pointing the way to the men's room. It is not their rights that are in question, but their ideas, which are bad ones.

Fundamentalists know, at least, that ideology precedes action. They have fingered secular humanism as their chief ideological enemy, and as if to form a more perfect target some secular humanists recently issued a manifesto which is as silly as fundamentalism is. Among the sixty-one signers are B. F. Skinner, Sidney Hook, Walter Kaufman, Isaac Asimov, and Francis Crick. The text predictably contrasts science and the scientific method (good) with religion (ignorant). The Secular Humanist Manifesto was issued in response to "fundamentalist, literalist, and doctrinaire Christianity; a rapidly growing and uncompromising Moslem clericalism in the Middle East and Asia; the reassertion of orthodox authority by the Roman Catholic papal hierarchy; nationalistic religious Judaism; and the reversion to obscurantist religions in Asia."

These happy folk believe that "men and women are free and are responsible for their own destinies" (OK, up to a point, but just try not dying and see where it gets you) "and that they cannot look toward some transcendent Being for salvation." Which transcendent Being, or what they mean by transcendence, or Being, or salvation, isn't clear—but then, it doesn't need to be: like most agnostics, these people think they know exactly what believers believe. (The most sensitive believers are not bad at a kind of agnosticism. "The man who says he knows God is depraved," says St. Basil, and the unknowable nature of God is central to much Orthodox and Catholic spirituality.)

Secular humanists and fundamentalists deserve one another. They form so perfectly balanced a phenomenon that, in Norman Mailer's fine phrase—he was writing about how aptly Bella Abzug was named—you are moved to "praise the novelist in the Lord." They are equally intolerant. Because liberal intolerance pretends to understand, it is not as obvious as fundamentalist intolerance, which thinks it understands the only thing that matters, and to hell (literally) with any other point of view. But secular humanist intolerance is clear enough. The most interesting part of the Manifesto says that it is wrong to "baptize infants, to confirm adolescents, or to impose a religious creed on young people before they are able to consent." The secular humanist would presumably raise his child with an open-minded faith in the power of reason to solve any important problem. "Secular humanism," the manifesto declares, "places trust in human reason rather than divine guidance." I didn't know that this was so clearly an either/or affair, but *they* know it is. To raise a child in proper secular humanist fashion means getting across the idea that religion is a subjective, socially irrelevant taste for interpretations of the universe which are baffling and upsetting to Mom and Dad. It isn't necessarily a bad thing that parents who believe in secular humanism indoctrinate their children in this fashion; indoctrination is one of the things children are for. What is incredible is the assumption that religious people indoctrinate, and secular humanists guide people toward truth.

The secular humanist does not mind having his point of view taught as if it were the truth. Something must be taught in schools, after all, and values of one sort or another will be imparted. An education which stresses the importance of teaching in a "value-free, nonjudgmental" environment assumes that values and morality are finally matters of personal choice, and that they are determined so subjectively that to suggest the existence of actions which are themselves good or evil is a violation of the student's rights. Fundamentalists are responding—stupidly, all thumbs—to this situation, which really is a threat in many ways. Right-wing Christians may be a little like the canaries coal miners used to take into the mines with them, because they were the first to be affected by poisonous gas. If values are completely subjective and must be regarded as such, unless they can be found scientifically to make sense, we will find it hard to explain, for example, what is offensive about Shockley's ideas on race, and the use to which those ideas can be put.

The problem of teaching values in a pluralistic society is difficult. But because I may not teach, in a public school, that God revealed himself to the world, it does not follow that, to keep from imposing my point of view on some little Nazi, I should confine myself to saying that values are matters of individual choice. The scientific method can say nothing about good and evil, but once the idea that some things are good and others evil is eliminated, you have eliminated heroism, generous action, and nobility from education. These necessarily involve a consideration of good and evil.

As uncomfortable as it may make people whose point of view is thoroughly secular, a person who takes belief seriously must not regard it as an entirely subjective, private taste, to be indulged in only so long as it affects no one else. This is the point of view of those who object to any attempt on the part of religious people to influence society. Religion is always reactionary, from this angle, always ready to reinstitute the Inquisition, replay the Scopes trial, and find Galileo guilty all over again. Too much history is ignored here: the first opponents of slavery were Christians, and it was for reasons not to be found in the Secular Humanist Manifesto that the colonial-era Quaker John Woolman tried

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to persuade slave owners to free their slaves, and soldiers to lay down their guns. The history of religion does include crusades and inquisitions, but it also includes abolitionism, the construction of the first hospitals, and opposition to political oppression. There is another side to this: the scientific method and the optimistic faith of the enlightenment have indeed given us marvelous things. But the first compulsory sterilization laws were introduced by reasonable men, to eliminate undesirable poor people from breeding—in the first case it was directed at a strange group of midwestern migrants, known as the Ishmaelite tribe. Later the Nazis picked up on the idea. They used pseudo-science to back up their genocidal policies, and the Nazis could count on the support of such reasonable men as Jung and Heidegger. In our time more people have died at the hands of anti-religious governments than ever died at the hands of religious zealots. More often than not the argument for the persecution of religious people is that they are superstitious, parasitical obstacles to the victory of reason. This justified the murder of believers in Albania, and their confinement in the Gulag. Reason alone will not help us be better humans.

Both the Christian right and the secular humanists represent dangerous political directions. The Moral Majority and its allies would impose the sort of behavior which they think ought to correspond to belief on the rest of society. Past attempts at this sort of thing range from Protestant prohibition to Catholic anti-contraceptive laws, and they were bad for society and for the churches. But a society devoid of the values which are preached, for better or worse, in churches and in synagogues could be a living hell. The challenge for believers is to make our traditions live without Caesar's help. That help is what the Moral Majority seems to want, and that is its greatest idol. In rejecting the ideas of the religious right, however, we have to make sure that we don't back into the ineffectual role the secular humanists have assigned religion. Their vision drains the world of its life.

Sir A. J. Ayer once delivered a series of lectures at Notre Dame. Ayer is a signer of the Secular Humanist Manifesto, and one of the leading Logical Positivists. (Logical Positivism, for those of you who are not in the know, is a movement started by Englishmen to prove once and for all that philosophy is irrelevant to anything that matters deeply to human beings.) During the course of his lectures Ayer said that ideas like "God" and "the One" are meaningless, nonsensical, beside the point. He demonstrated this by rapping the chair next to him and shaking it once in awhile; I guess this was to show that the chair was real, verifiable, whereas God wasn't. At the end of one lecture, during the time for questions, a Hindu graduate student of mathematics stood up and said, "Mr. Ayer, you say that ideas like God and the One are meaningless and without any point. There are people who say the same thing about music. We call them tone-deaf."

JOHN GARVEY

Of several minds: *Abigail McCarthy*

WHY WE STAY HOME

AUTHENTICITY & THE VOTE

THIS WEEK political experts, scholars, and commentators are meeting with the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate, on whose board I serve, to discuss once again the alarming decline of voter participation in our national elections. Most, if not all, of those present see this phenomenon as a danger for the future of democratic government. And are dismayed that only 53.1 percent of the eligible electorate voted to choose the president in 1980. That is the lowest turnout since 1948.

Low turnout, the conveners believe, gives small, intense, and one-issue groups inordinate power. It also signifies deeper problems within the American system. Most of us know some of the factors contributing to the problem: the weakening of political parties and *other institutions*, the role of the media in elections, the legal and structural impediments still blocking full participation for all eligible to vote, and the disillusionment of the public with politics in general.

I believe that the most fundamental cause is that voting is no longer perceived as an authentic act. It no longer connects the real with the real. Democracy requires that the relationship of citizens to leaders be that of persons to persons. For too long a time ours has been the relationship of persons to packages . . . packages with human face and form—and, somewhere within the wrappings, no doubt, a winning but fallible human personality—but a package put together by pollsters, image-makers, pulse-takers, and speech-writers. Voting under such conditions is not making a choice; it is buying a product.

The conviction of this came home to me again a few weeks ago when Walter Cronkite gave the annual endowed lecture to members of the board and guests of the Washington Journalism Center. Cronkite is known for writing and rewriting the material with which he goes on the air, and one had confidence in listening to his thoughtful, well-crafted talk that, although he probably had help with research, etc., it reflected the concerns, the opinions, even the crotchets, of the man himself. There was no essential difference in language and stance between the man who spoke and the man who answered the questions. It occurred to me that the perception of this congruence on the part of the public may be the reason that Walter Cronkite is called the most trusted man in America. This is not to say that he should be a candidate for high office, but that candidates for high office should speak, as he does, with their own voices.

Communication and leadership are

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mysteriously interwined, as are language and personality. When the words we hear are not those of the man who speaks them a basic falsity is at the root of the relationship between hearer and speaker. The same is true of the written word. The editor of *The New Republic* wrote recently that that journal seldom published papers under the name of American political figures because so few were written by the men themselves. He cited the number of English parliamentarians on the other hand whose work he could publish with confidence, and who could also write on subjects other than politics. But it is not necessary for the American public man to speak or write with the erudition of his British counterpart. All that is necesssary is that we can discern the voice of the real person, be he or she given to bluntness or mangling the language a bit.

Any speaker with a grain of sense tries to fit his or her speech to an audience. But it is quite different for a political candidate to develop opinions and propose programs to fit the desires of the voters, after these desires have been pin-pointed by poll-takers. There is to me something offensive in the already traditional post-election meeting of the new class of political professionals at Harvard. They gather—the managers and chairmen and pollsters—to talk of what happened, of how their charges handled, of what worked and what didn't work. Oh, one can hope that they and their candidates are not completely without conviction and idealism, but the emphasis is bound to be on form rather than substance. The political person dependent on these professionals, if that they are, is a political person diminished.

Much of the loss of authenticity has to be attributed to the power of the television medium. A man on film is only the projection of the real man. And the global village, which McLuhan has taught us that television has given us, does not have the solidity and shared experience of the real village of history, yet does have some of the worst of village characteristics: subservience to material success, feudal relationships, hostility to difference, the magnification of quarrels into permanent conflict, the institutionalizing of gossip, and the refusal to admit of greatness. One of the strangest effects of the mass media, Walter Cronkite pointed out, is that the closer the office-holder is to us, the less we know about him. The president seems our familiar but we do not recognize the city councilman who may well live on the next street. Local community is blotted out.

Television also has falsities that are not inherent, as Cronkite also pointed out. The current news format which squeezes all news including campaign coverage into a scant twenty-four minutes means that the contest element in an election is overemphasized and that little attention and analysis is given to issues and programs. He has argued for extended coverage. He also professed scorn for the local news show presided over by elegantly-coiffed ("and I mean male," he said) "giggling" newscasters. They trivialize the news, and inspire cynicism.

It is not impossible for television to serve the authentic. It must be better used within its limitations and technological requirements. Help may be on the way in the advent of Cable with its twenty-four-hour news, multiplication of channels, and the capacity to zero in on local and particular audiences.

If we can reverse the trend to the synthetic candidate and use the media, rather than let ourselves be used, we may restore authenticity to the act of choice voting is meant to be.

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

Of several minds: *Frank Getlein*

THE REAL BUREAU-CRACY

WILL WE DECLARE INDEPENDENCE OF THE FBI?

THERE WAS something chilling about the two things happening in the same week. First, Romain Gary, the French novelist, killed himself after a long period of brooding despair following the self-destruction of his former wife, Jean Seberg, the actress. Seberg had lost a baby at birth and, according to an almost universally believed story among show business people and others interested, been driven to suicide by rumors circulated by the FBI that the child was that of a black activist with whom Seberg had been friendly. From the point of view of the FBI, Seberg's crime was sympathy toward the Black Panthers and similar groups. Second, a few days later, the Justice Department announced that it would probably drop the pending suit against former Acting Director of the FBI, L. Patrick Gray, Jr., on the grounds of having illegally authorized the illegal entries and other acts against citizens by FBI agents duly tried, convicted, and sentenced for those acts.

Both cases are highly complicated, much more so than can appear in such a brief summary as that above. The Gray case appears to be subject to two broad interpretations: either he had been set up by the Justice Department—which he himself claims—as a kind of after-the-fact patsy for Bureau practice over many years; or, the Department backed down out of sheer awe at going after a Bureau Director, even an acting one.

If Gray was set up, it wouldn't be the first time. It was Gray's fate to arrive on the Bureau's scene as nominated successor to the sainted J. Edgar Hoover just as Watergate was crashing through the breakwaters of the Nixon administration. The instant reaction of the Nixonites was first to make Gray a patsy by passing him documents taken from Howard Hunt's White House safe so that White House people could say, only lying a little bit, that they had turned the material over to the FBI; the understanding from the point of view of John Dean was that Gray was to withhold such evidence; the understanding from the point of Gray, according to Dean, was that Gray was to destroy them and, according to Dean, Gray did

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so. The Nixonians lived up to their colors, after having thus traduced the nation's leading law enforcement officer and after he had obstructed justice at their behest, by letting him, in the sensitive words of chief thug Haldeman, hang slowly, slowly, twisting in the wind.

It is impossible to read the various crook book accounts of all this and not feel a certain sympathy for Gray, who obviously walked into the robbers' roost that the Nixon administration had become rather like Harold Lloyd arriving to claim his inheritance, a south side of Chicago bootlegging gang, in a movie so old even I don't remember the name. The poor man had, at the outset at least, no notion of the double-dyed villainy of the people he was not merely thrown among but asked to respect as his legally constituted superior officer and that officer's highest agents.

All the same, Gray did, on the unchallenged record of several Nixon crooks, destroy physical evidence of crime and therefore obstruct justice, and of these obvious criminal acts there has never been so much as a whisper from the Justice Department.

It is not only possible but highly likely that Gray was really unaware of what his recently convicted agents were doing. That sort of illegal breaking and entering, stealing and electronic eavesdropping, with no warrant, hence no presentment of reasonable suspicion of crime going forward before any objective, professional, outside authority, such as a judge, had been practiced for years by the Bureau. The law-enforcement officers were, in fact, law-breakers, and it is little comfort to law-abiding citizens when present-day officers and spokesmen for the Bureau assure us that those practices are no longer indulged in. Perhaps they aren't. On the other hand, when by universal admission they were indulged in, assuredly no one at or near the Bureau was admitting it and if the question ever came up everyone was denying it as everyone is today.

Also, the present Bureau, by its own boast, has become the leading bribe-giver in the country, or at least the leading profferer of bribes to public officials, namely the targeted Congressmen who have been enduring electoral defeat, forced resignations, indictments, convictions, and sentences, all at the hands of an FBI suddenly gone into the business of bribing public officials. But there cannot be a bribe-taker without a bribe-giver. If Congressmen are to be tried for accepting bribes, should not the FBI, starting with the director who authorized the whole Abscam test of virtue be likewise tried for giving bribes? It seems reasonable, but then reason never has been the dominant mode with which the American people have viewed the FBI.

This indeed is the ultimate triumph of J. Edgar. When you think of secret police, you think of the Russians, under both the Czars and the Commissars, of the Viennese under Henry Kissinger's beau ideal, Metternich, of the Gestapo, of the Fascists in Italy and Franco's Spain. You don't think of the FBI but that is exactly how the Bureau has been operating almost from its inception, certainly from an early period in Hoover's long reign. Yet, by the most skillful lobbying in the history of the Republic and at the same time the most skillful manipulation of the press except possibly that by Joe McCarthy and Salvador Dali, the FBI has long been regarded by most Americans as a collection of heroes defending the nation against its enemies foreign and domestic. Actually, if the Bill of Rights is to be taken at all seriously, the FBI has itself been one of the prime enemies of the Republic.

A new administration is now preparing to take office. It is a group that has won its victory in part, it is widely thought, because of the popularity of its appeal to get government off the backs of the people. One would think that government could hardly be more "on the backs" of the people than when illegally breaking and entering, destroying evidence of criminal acts, wire-tapping and in general carrying on as has the FBI these many decades. If the Declaration of Independence is to be taken seriously, the FBI has systematically engaged in many of the specific acts and at large exhibited the same sort of spirit that, when the British did the same in the eighteenth century, Americans of good will rallied to throw off the yoke. Today, many Americans of presumed good will cheer on the malefactors. Among these cheering citizens, it seems, are many of the supporters and spokesmen of the new administration if not its leaders.

There is an odd philosophical torque here, one as far as I know only really addressed by such fringe figures as Eugene McCarthy and the Libertarians. Government on the backs of the people is interpreted, through this torque, as a concept solely to be found embodied in government actions to protect the people from the depredations of business and industry, particularly the poisoning of the water and the air by business and industry and the selling of products under misrepresentations of various kinds. If government attempts to compel a factory-owner to observe elementary precautions for the safety of his workers, that is government on the backs of the people. If government, on the other hand, breaks laws on the books by burglarizing citizens' homes and offices, by installing illegal wire-taps on their telephones, that is not government on the backs of the people, it is reasonable prudence.

The torque extends to fiscal matters. For government to give—or sell, actually—food stamps to poor families is trying to solve problems by throwing money at them. In contrast, for government to install and advocate the most expensive and improbable military schemes to thwart the dread Russians, that is not trying to solve problems by throwing money at them, but, again, reasonable prudence. It continues to be reasonable prudence when the schemes turn out to cost twice or three times as much as announced, when the costly devices fail to work at all, and when, if they do work, they are found to be obsolete as soon as the last cost overrun is paid to the last company represented by the last general or admiral recently retired from military procurement. It's curious.

The most hopeful thing about the new administration is Candidate Reagan's repudiation of military conscription, which, to any normal mind, is government on the backs of the people par excellence. Perhaps he will move on to get the FBI back within the law.

FRANK GETLEIN

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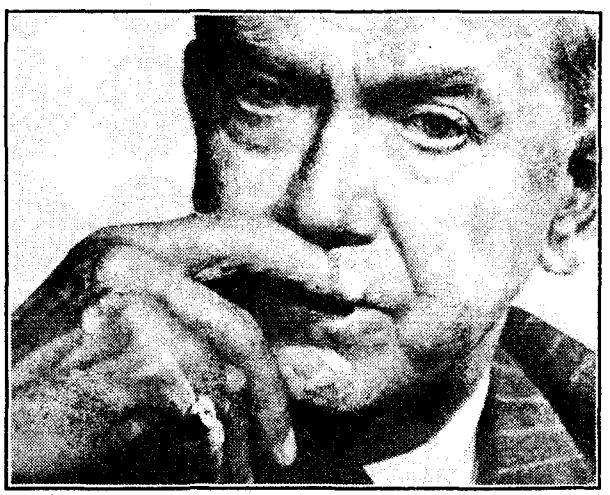

THE LABYRINTHINE WAYS

The birth of a 'Catholic writer'

GRAHAM GREENE

BRIGHTON ROCK I began in 1937 as a detective story and continued, I am sometimes tempted to think, as an error of judgment. Until I published this novel I had, like any other novelist, been sometimes praised for a success and sometimes condemned with good enough reasons as I fumbled at my craft, but now I was discovered to be—detestable term!—a Catholic writer. Catholics began to treat some of my faults too kindly, as though I were a member of a clan and could not be disowned, while some non-Catholic critics seemed to consider that my faith gave me an unfair advantage in some way over my contemporaries. I had become a Catholic in 1926, and all my books, except for the one lamentable volume of verse at Oxford, had been written as a Catholic, but no one had noticed the faith to which I belonged before the publication of *Brighton Rock*. Even today some critics (and critics as a class are seldom more careful of their facts than journalists) refer to the novels written *after* my conversion, making a distinction between the earlier and the later books.

Many times since *Brighton Rock* I have been forced to declare myself not a Catholic writer but a writer who happens to be a Catholic. Newman wrote the last word on "Catholic literature" in *The Idea of a University:*

> I say, from the nature of the case, if Literature is to be made a study of human nature, you cannot have a Christian Literature. It is a contradiction in terms to attempt a sinless Literature of sinful man. You may gather together something very great and high, something higher than any Literature ever was; and when you have done so, you will find that it is not Literature at all.

Nevertheless it is true to say that by 1937 the time was ripe for me to use Catholic characters. It takes longer to familiarize oneself with a region of the mind than with a country, but the ideas of my Catholic characters, even their Catholic ideas, were not necessarily mine.

MORE THAN ten years had passed since I was received into the church. At that time I had not been emotionally moved, but only intellectually convinced; I was in the habit of formally practicing my religion, going to Mass every Sunday and to Confession perhaps once a month, and in my spare time I read a good deal of theology—sometimes with fascination, sometimes with repulsion, nearly always with interest.

I was still not earning enough with my books to make a living for my family (after the success of my first novel and the spurious temporary sale of *Orient Express* each novel added a small quota to the debt I owed my publisher), but by reviewing films regularly for the *Spectator* and novels once a fortnight, I could make ends meet. I had recently had two strokes of good fortune, and these enabled me to see a little way ahead—I had received a contract from Korda to write my second film script (and a terrible one it was, based on Galsworthy's short story *The First and Last*—Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh, who had much to forgive me, suffered together in the leading parts), and for six months I had acted as joint editor with John Marks of the weekly *Night and Day*. My professional life and my religion were contained in quite separate compartments, and I had no ambition to bring them together. It was "clumsy life again at her stupid work" which did that; on the one side the socialist persecution of religion in Mexico, and on the other General Franco's attack on Republican Spain, inextricably involved religion in contemporary life.

I think it was under those two influences—and the backward and forward sway of my sympathies—that I began to examine more closely the effect of faith on action. Catholicism was no longer primarily symbolic, a ceremony at an altar with the correct canonical number of candles, with the women in my Chelsea congregation wearing their best hats, nor was it a philosophical page in Father D'Arcy's *Nature of Belief*. It was closer now to death in the afternoon.

GRAHAM GREENE, *the well-known British novelist, was recently awarded The Jerusalem Prize which honors authors whose works celebrate "the freedom of the individual in society." The above excerpts are from his latest work,* Ways of Escape, *copyright © 1980 by Graham Greene, reprinted by permission of Simon & Schuster.*

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A restlessness set in then which has never quite been allayed: a desire to be a spectator of history, history in which I found I was concerned myself. I tried to fly into Bilbao from Toulouse, for my sympathies were more engaged by the Catholic struggle against Franco than with the competing sectarians in Madrid. I carried a letter of recommendation from the Basque Delegation in London to a small cafe owner in Toulouse who had been breaking the blockade of Bilbao with a two-seater plane. I found him shaving in a corner of his cafe at six in the morning and handed him the Delegation's dignified letter, sealed with scarlet wax, but no amount of official sealing wax would induce him to fly his plane again into Bilbao—Franco's guns on his last flight had proved themselves too accurate for his comfort. With Mexico I was more fortunate, an advance payment for a book on the religious persecution enabled me to leave for Tabasco and Chiapas, where the persecution was continuing well away from the tourist areas, and it was in Mexico that I corrected the proofs of *Brighton Rock*.

It was in Mexico too that I discovered some emotional belief, among the empty and ruined churches from which the priests had been excluded, at the secret Masses of Las Casas celebrated without the sanctus bell, among the swaggering *pistoleros*, but probably emotion had been astir before that, or how was it that a book which I had intended to be a simple detective story should have involved a discussion, too obvious and open for a novel, of the distinction between good-and-evil and right-and-wrong and the mystery of "the appalling strangeness of the mercy of God"—a mystery that was to be the subject of three more of my novels? The first fifty pages of *Brighton Rock* are all that remain of the detective story; they would irritate me if I dared to look at them now, for I know I ought to have had the strength of mind to remove them and to start the story again—with what is now called Part Two. "A lost thing could I never find, nor a broken thing mend."

I HAD NOT meant to write more than this one book, commissioned by a publisher, on the religious persecution. I had no idea, even after I had returned home, that a novel, *The Power and the Glory*, would emerge from my experiences. The proofs of *Brighton Rock*, while I was away in Mexico, had occupied my thoughts, and perhaps the Franco volunteers on the German ship I took back to Europe began a train of ideas which ended in *The Confidential Agent*. Now, of course, when I reread *Another Mexico*, I can easily detect many of the characters in *The Power and the Glory*. The old Scotsman, Dr. Robert Fitzpatrick, whom I met in Villahermosa, with his cherished scorpion in a little glass bottle, was the kind of treasure trove that falls to the lucky traveler. In recounting the story of his own life he told me of the kindly disreputable Padre Rey of Panama with his wife and daughter and the mice—not a scorpion—which he kept in a glass lamp. So it was that the doctor put me on the track of Father José in my novel; perhaps he even showed me the road to Panama, which I was to postpone visiting for nearly forty years, and then was amply rewarded. Above all he presented me with my subject: the protagonist of *The Power and the Glory*. "I asked about the priest in Chiapas who had fled. 'Oh,' he said, 'He was just what we call a whisky priest.' He had taken one of his sons to be baptized, but the priest was drunk and would insist on naming the child Brigitta. 'He was little loss, poor man.' "

So it is that the material of a novel accumulates, without the

Graham Greene on theology & atheism

I HAVE OFTEN noticed that Catholic and Marxist critics are more perceptive than others, their criticism less subjective. I was not a famous Catholic figure as Querry was in the novel [*A Burnt-Out Case*], nor had I abandoned my church and my old mode of life as Querry had done. But there *were* new elements in this book, whether it was a failure or a success. The critic who saw in it nothing but the old crosses on the Easter eggs (he was referring to Querry's fable) was more at sea than the Marxist critic in Poland who welcomed the novel as a renunciation of the Catholic church, or my dear friend Evelyn Waugh, who realized that Querry was a redraft (perhaps a less satisfactory one) of the old French Catholic writer in my short story "A Visit to Morin" and was grieved by the book.

I wrote to the Communist paper that as a Catholic I considered myself able to treat loss of faith just as freely as discovery of faith, and I trusted that if I were a Communist writer in his country I would be able to take as a character a lapsed Communist. I asked that the fee they owed me for their extensive quotations, which were mainly from Querry's fable, should be sent to the repair fund of Warsaw Cathedral.

I find nothing unsympathetic in atheism, even in Marxist atheism. *My* wasteland is inhabited by the pious "suburbans" of whom I had too carelessly written—I had not meant the piety of simple people, who accept God without question, but the piety of the educated, the established, who seem to own their Roman Catholic image of God, who have ceased to look for him because they consider they have found him. Perhaps Unamuno had these in mind

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author's knowledge, not always easily, not always without fatigue or pain or even fear.

I think *The Power and the Glory* is the only novel I have written to a thesis: in *The Heart of the Matter* Wilson sat on a balcony in Freetown watching Scobie pass by in the street long before I was aware of Scobie's problem—his corruption by pity. But I had always, even when I was a schoolboy, listened with impatience to the scandalous stories of tourists concerning the priests they had encountered in remote Latin villages (this priest had a mistress, another was constantly drunk), for I had been adequately taught in my Protestant history books what Catholics believed; I could distinguish even then between the man and his office. Now, many years later, as a Catholic in Mexico, I read and listened to stories of corruption which were said to have justified the persecution of the church under Calles and under his successor and rival Cárdenas, but I had also observed for myself how courage and the sense of responsibility had revived with persecution—I had seen the devotion of peasants praying in the priestless churches and I had attended Masses in upper rooms where the sanctus bell could not sound for fear of the police. I had not found the idealism or integrity of the Lieutenant of *The Power and the Glory* among the police and *pistoleros* I had actually encountered—I had to invent him as a counter to the failed priest: the idealistic police officer who stifled life from the best possible motives; the drunken priest who continued to pass life on.

THE BOOK gave me more satisfaction than any other I had written, but it waited nearly ten years for success. In England the first edition was one of 3,500 copies—a printing one thousand larger than that of my first novel eleven years before—and it crept out a month or so before Hitler invaded the Low Countries; in the United States it was published under the difficult and misleading title of *The Labyrinthine Ways*, chosen by the publishers (selling, I think, two thousand copies). After the war was over its success in France, due to François Mauriac's generous introduction, brought danger from two fronts, Hollywood and the Vatican. A pious film called *The Fugitive*, which I could never bring myself to see, was made by John Ford, who gave all the integrity to the priest and the corruption to the Lieutenant (he was even made the father of the priest's child), while the success of the novel in French Catholic circles caused what we now call a backlash, so that it was twice delated to Rome by French bishops. Some ten years after publication the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster read me a letter from the Holy Office condemning my novel because it was "paradoxical' and "dealt with extraordinary circumstances." The price of liberty, even within a church, is eternal vigilance, but I wonder whether any of the totalitarian states, whether of the right or of the left, with which the Church of Rome is often compared, would have treated me as gently when I refused to revise the book on the casuistical ground that the copyright was in the hands of my publishers. There was no public condemnation, and the affair was allowed to drop into that peaceful oblivion which the church wisely reserves for unimportant issues. Years later, when I met Pope Paul VI, he mentioned that he had read the book. I told him that it had been condemned by the Holy Office.

"Who condemned it?"

"Cardinal Pissardo."

He repeated the name with a wry smile and added, "Mr. Greene, some parts of your books are certain to offend some Catholics, but you should pay no attention to that."

Frank McConnell reviews Graham Greene's Ways of Escape *and Evelyn Waugh's* Letters *on page 21 of this issue.*

when he wrote: "Those who believe that they believe in God, but without passion in their hearts, without anguish of mind, without uncertainty, without doubt, without an element of despair even in their consolation, believe only in the God Idea, not God Himself." I would not look for Querry in that wasteland; I would seek him among those—Unamuno decribes them—"in whom reason is stronger than will, they feel themselves caught in the grip of reason and haled along in their own despite, and they fall into despair, and because of their despair they deny, and God reveals Himself in them, affirming Himself by their very denial of Him."

Querry, like my other character Morin, was a victim of theology. Morin said to his non-Catholic interviewer, "A man can accept anything to do with God until scholars begin to go into details and the implications. A man can accept the Trinity, but the arguments that follow. . . . I would never try to determine some point in differential calculus with a two-times-two table. You end by disbelieving the calculus. . . . I used to believe in Revelation, but I never believed in the capacity of the human mind."

I had not known Unamuno's *A Tragic Sense of Life* when I wrote "A Visit to Morin" or later *A Burnt-Out Case*, but when I came to read his book I found there the same distrust of theology that Morin felt: "The Catholic solution of our problem, of our unique vital problem, the problem of the immortality and eternal salvation of the individual soul, satisfies the will, and therefore satisfies life; but the attempts to rationalize it by means of dogmatic theology fail to satisfy the reason. And the reason has its exigencies as imperious as those of life." And again: "the traditional so-called proofs of the existence of God all refer to this God Idea, to this logical God, the God by abstraction, and hence they really prove nothing or rather they prove nothing more than the existence of this idea of God."

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EL SALVADOR, AFTER THE U.S. ELECTION

Green light for terror

RICHARD ALAN WHITE

WHEN ELECTION RETURNS on the night of November 4 showed that Ronald Reagan would soon be the president of the United States, El Salvador rightists celebrated "their victory" by firing guns into the air. Ever since, in expectation of the Reagan presidency, they have increasingly been firing their guns into people. In the hope of presenting the new administration with themselves firmly in power—a *fait accompli* that would be more acceptable than the brutal slaughter now being conducted to solidify their power—Salvadoran Security Forces and paramilitary death squads are attempting to eliminate the leadership of the center-left opposition Democratic Revolutionary Front (F.D.R.).

Among the hundreds of victims of the right-wing terrorism were three nuns and a Catholic lay worker, all from the United States, who were kidnapped, tortured, and raped before being executed and thrown into a common grave. In large part the fact that these people were American citizens accounts for the widespread press coverage in this country. But not since the invasion of Manchuria has the world witnessed such bestiality as the raping, torturing, and killing of nuns. And just as it reflects the savagery of the Manchurian conquest, so does this atrocity depict the depths of of barbarism to which the reactionary politicians, businessmen, and soldiers are prepared to stoop in order to maintain their privileged positions in El Salvador's society.

Even the United States Ambassador, Robert E. White, a practicing Catholic, who has supported and defended the ruling junta, has been moved to take unprecedented action. At the grave site, as the bodies were being exhumed, he promised, "This time they won't get away with it. They just won't." The next day all military and economic aid was suspended until an investigation by a high-ranking diplomatic team from Washington could determine the extent of government involvement. Yet Ambassador White, his good intentions notwithstanding, may have also been reacting to expectations regarding the coming Reagan administration. High on the Reaganite "hit list" to be sacked because of his liberal philosophy and the social reform policies that he pushed in El Salvador, White seems to be taking his parting, and perhaps best, shot as he is forced out of his post.

Since his arrival in El Salvador last March, White has made few friends. He has been in a no-win position from the start. His thankless job was to implement the "reform-and-repression" policy of the U.S.-backed civilian-military junta. This carrot-and-stick approach was meant to stave off revolutionary change by enacting reforms in land ownership, banking, and export commerce, at the same time as the mili tary and their paramilitary death squads increased brutal repression to smash the various opposition groups. The social reform program drove the rightists to stage demonstrations in front of Ambassador White's residence, denouncing him as a Communist. One consequence of his support of the government repression was a rocket attack on his office by leftist guerrillas. They see him as the tool of Yankee imperialism. And as if all this were not enough, a squad of battle-ready U.S. Marines have been deployed to live in his mansion.

THERE CAN BE little denying that the entire U.S. policy in El Salvador is a failure. The series of civilian-military juntas that have come and gone since the coup overthrowing General Humberto Romero in October, 1979, has progressively moved to the right.

Following the coup of the young military officers, the Carter administration quickly recognized and began providing support to the new liberal-oriented government. The five-man civilian-military junta that initially took power was comprised of both progressive and conservative military officers, as well as three leaders from the Social Democratic party. But this coalition lasted only three months; in January 1980 the three civilian members resigned, protesting the unwillingness of the military to purge the extremists from its own Security Forces and to curb the activities of the paramilitary death squads.

The Social Democrats, who joined the opposition F.D.R., were replaced by more conservative Christian Democrats, marking a distinct swing to the right. Even so, beginning in March and lasting through May, these new civilian members of the junta, and nearly all of the cabinet ministers, themselves resigned. Again, protesting the excesses of rightist violence, they took with them the vast majority of the Christian Democratic party members, most of whom have subsequently also joined the F.D.R. Replaced by other even more conservative,

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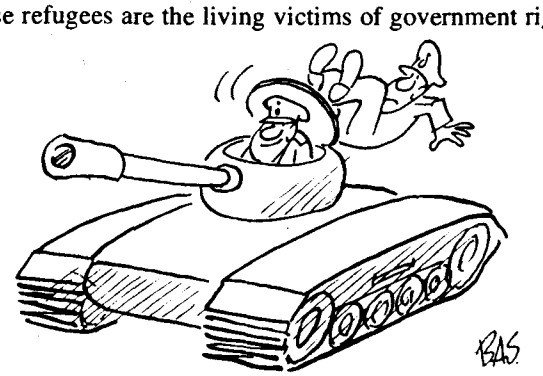
and manageable, leaders of the decimated Christian Democratic party, the hard liners conducted a purge of the armed forces, systematically relieving progressive officers of their combat commands.

In the wake of the furor over the recent wave of political assassinations, in mid-December the junta was formally abolished. In a reshuffling of the stacked political deck, one of the junta's complacent civilian members, José Napoleon Duarte, was named president, and the hard-line military representative, Col. Jaime Abdul Gutierrez, was appointed vice president, and, of most importance, commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The acting Archbishop of San Salvador, Arturo Rivera Dumas, immediately issued a press release denouncing this latest machination, for little has been done to change the basic structure of power, and nothing to stop those in the military and the rightist death squads that are responsible for the continuing slaughter. Effectively, what has happened is that a cosmetic civilian head-of-state, a president that has no control over the nation's armed forces, now can be held up to the world as a figurehead of liberal reform.

Over the past fifteen months, in this way, the liberal reformists have been driven out of the government and the military, often to join the F.D.R. opposition, as the reforms have proved ineffectual and the rightists increased the level of killings. Little by little, rightist sectors of society have moved to recapture their previous power, so that now, once again, they dominate the government and the military. Reagan's election, they assumed, was the green light to sweep aside the last of progressive window dressing. Liberal Col. Adolfo Majano, after being stripped of his troop command, was summarily dismissed from the junta early last month. Unleashing the dogs of war, the death squads were given free reign to indulge their blood lust against "subversives" like Sister Ita Ford, one of the slain Maryknoll missionaries.

Although more dramatic than most, the death of Sister Ita is about the eight thousandth claimed by rightist terrorism this year alone. Because of her work with the ever-increasing numbers of refugees, Sister Ita was branded a "subversive" by rightists, who took to sending death threats to her house. Indeed, by the political rapists' perverted logic, they have a point. If distributing food, medicine, and clothing to thousands of hungry, diseased, and barefooted people that despise the government is subversive, then Sister Ita was a subversive.

These refugees are the living victims of government right-wing terrorism, and to identify oneself with them necessarily meant sharing their fate. But for Sister Ita, there really was no choice. In the course of her work she daily listened to the horror stories, numbly expressing sympathy as she was told about how the army or the National Guard had raided a village, running amok, raping, burning, stealing, disemboweling husbands and sons, and forcing their wives and mothers to watch as dogs gorged themselves on the entrails. Political scientists call this the "social cost" of the Salvadoran government policy, which unintentionally made stability the hostage of repression: Sister Ita thought it was barbaric and inhuman—or more accurately, unChristian—and dedicated her life to alleviating the plight of her fellow Christians. And just as cost-benefit-minded policy makers and diplomats find this commitment unfathomable, Sister Ita was equally at a loss to grasp how these good people at the U.S. Embassy and State Department could possibly give money and material support to the Salvadoran government and armed forces who are viciously slaughtering their own people.



IF ONE assumes that there is a relationship between what the Reaganites have said they will do and the policies that the Reagan administration will actually follow, El Salvador's future looks bleak. De-emphasizing, or even abandoning, the reform effort, the Republicans can be expected to rely upon the traditional foreign policy of supporting strong military regimes in Latin America; and, despite the regrettable social cost, they will substantially increase military assistance and economic aid to the rightist Salvadoran junta. The reactionary objective of returning the country to the "good old days," even with massive U.S. backing, is fantasy.

Until recently there was a viable solution, a political reconciliation that would have brought the F.D.R. opposition front into the government. But the Thanksgiving Day kidnapping and torture execution of five of its six top leaders has ended any hope of such a political compromise. The right has unequivocably opted for the military solution, or as the Minister of Defense, Col. Guillermo Garcia, puts it, "a war of annihilation." In human terms, what this means, because the opposition forces are now militarily stronger than they have ever been, is an escalating civil war that will certainly drag on for months, perhaps years, and claim thousands more lives, produce a singular catalogue of atrocities, and create hundreds of thousands more refugees.

There is an alternative, but likely it will be less acceptable to a Reagan administration than the "social cost" suffered by the Sister Itas and the people she died helping. Liberal politicians and Army officers, who now are out of power, have long advocated bringing the opposition F.D.R. into a true position of power in a new coalition government. It is necessary to understand that the F.D.R. is itself a coalition umbrella grouping of opponents of the government. Its members consist of established Salvadoran political parties such as the Christian Democrats, formally the largest political party, and Social Democrats, who exercise considerably more influence by their sheer numbers than the smaller leftist parties, which include

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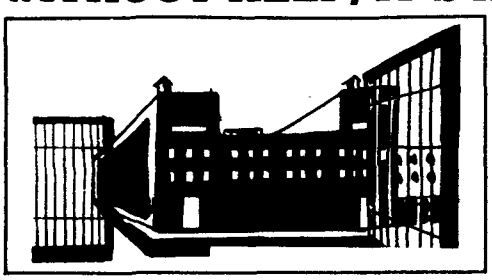
the National Democratic Union. The bulk of its membership comes from a variety of labor unions, student organizations and professional associations. Of great importance are the so-called "popular organizations," and first among them is the Popular Revolutionary Bloc (which claims 80,000 members), itself in turn a coalition of the nation's two major peasant federations, workers, students, teachers, and slum dwellers. Moreover, the F.D.R. encompasses four guerrilla groups that are engaged in an armed conflict against the Salvadoran Armed Forces. The Catholic church, through its legal aid and refugee relief programs, must also be recognized as a de facto participant. Although exact statistics are unavailable, reliable estimates establish the F.D.R. membership at between 200,000 and 400,000 active members, with perhaps 20,000 armed guerrillas.

Regardless of the recurrent rumors claiming outside assistance to the guerrillas—specifically arms and advisers from Nicaragua and Cuba—no tangible evidence has surfaced to date that would support any other conclusion but that the F.D.R. is an indigenous, autonomous, and self-supporting Salvadoran opposition force.

It is not beyond the ability of the United States to bring the now powerless liberal politicians and military officers, together with the F.D.R., into a workable coalition government. The foundation of El Salvador's export economy rests upon selling coffee and cotton, which comprise sixty percent of this commerce, in large part to United States markets. Simple straightforward trade restrictions, tied with pressure upon our allies to implement similar policies, exercising our influence in the international banking world to limit multilateral credits and loans, and, of course, eliminating all bilateral economic and military assistance, would quickly result in this new centrist government. Clearly this is interventionism; in fact, the mirror opposite of the interventionism that we are now exercising. But it is not unprecedented: what would be necessary is only a mini-program along the lines of United States policy toward the Salvador Allende regime in Chile during the early 1970s.

Of course such a policy is ideologically unthinkable: Chile *sí*, El Salvador *no*. But at least let us shed some hypocrisy and openly acknowledge the moral contradiction of our present policy of giving succor to the rightist El Salvadoran regime: we have positioned ourselves to become the direct accomplices to the inevitable killing of many, many more Sister Itas.

WITHOUT HELP, IT'S ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE IT



Going straight

ROBERT JOE STOUT

TO THE OUTSIDER it sounds easy: "You've learned your lesson, you know what being in prison is like, so get a job, go straight, leave it all behind."

Get a job. Every application form has a section on the first page, near the bottom, "Have you ever been convicted of anything other than minor traffic violations? If so, explain."

What do you put down?

I was arrested and convicted of assault . . . robbery of a grocery clerk while holding a crowbar against his throat . . . manslaughter while driving drunk . . ?

Or you tell the waitress you've been dating, "Yeah, I was in the joint. One guy—usually the smallest—was 'whore for the month.' We used to—"

Or sit over coffee across from the wife you'd asked to stop visiting you in prison and see the strain on her face as she brushed away all mention of years on food stamps and welfare checks and guys on the make and the kid bragging what his old man would do when he got out and the daughter arrested for lifting an $8.00 ring from Penney's and. . . .

Seven out of ten convicts released from prison find themselves back behind bars within three years. A prison-toughened Missouri parolee pointed to tattoos on his left bicep. "See that? That's in the skin and it don't come off. Well, the joint puts a mark like that in your mind. You don't never get rid of it. Never!"

Like many ex-cons with a history of periodic violent confrontations with other members of society, Richard Carder couldn't make it on the outside. Thirteen months after being paroled with good-time credits, he was arrested during a liquor store break-in, shot in the left leg and bound over for trial. Although willing to admit that the robbery attempt was both ill-planned and "stupid," Carder bitterly told his court-appointed attorney that it didn't make that much difference. "My life outside ain't that much better than it was in the joint. I'm a loser either way."

Carder's wife divorced him while he was in prison and she and their two young sons moved to California. Through a relative in rural southwestern Missouri, Carder found work with a mobile home-assembling firm. Though he earned

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enough for rent and food, and bought a second-hand car ("I had to pay cash for it—I couldn't get no loans . . ."), he was left with a lot of time to himself. He began to drink rather heavily, despite the fact that staying away from bars was a condition of his parole, and to mix with the few women who found him acceptable.

Transferred to another division of the mobile home firm, Carder was fired after a fellow employee complained that he was abusive and difficult to work with. (The complainant, it turned out, was a Protestant lay preacher who admitted that the "abusiveness" was confined to language and the ex-con's outspoken attitudes toward women and sex.)

Carder responded by getting drunk. Arrested after a brawl outside a rural tavern, he was released without charges being filed. His parole officer dealt a sternly worded warning: do it again and you go back to jail!

The incidents confirmed Carder's perception that the world was out to get him. He felt thwarted and alone. He began to identify the social forces that he had had to deal with—prospective employers, parole officers, affluent neighbors—as oppressors. He convinced himself that he had a right to strike back at them. "At least, in the joint, there's other people like me. People who've been pushed around, and know what it feels like."

"THE EXPERIENCE of spending a year—or even less—in prison radically transforms a man's personality," a Florida psychologist told the now defunct Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. Sociologist Robert Taggart III's studies of released felons confirmed that many of them suffer from paranoia during the first year after their release. "The initial confrontation with the 'streets' is apt to be painful and . . . accompanied by disappointment, anxiety, and depression," John Irwin states in *The Felon*.

A Mathematica Policy Research study in Baltimore examined the post-release patterns of 432 offenders, which they divided into four groups. Two groups received $60 a week for the first three months of their re-entry period, the other two did not. In addition, one group also received job placement services for a year, as did one of the groups that did not receive weekly stipends.

By the end of the first year, the financially aided group showed a much lower recidivism rate. Many more of its members were legitimately employed. Although they were less likely to get full-time jobs right away, they were more likely to enroll in school or training programs. Charles D. Mallar and Craig V. D. Thornton, who headed the study, concluded that the $60 a week "cushion" had enabled those who received it to search for long-term jobs which offered a higher degree of security than those obtained by their non-subsidized counterparts.

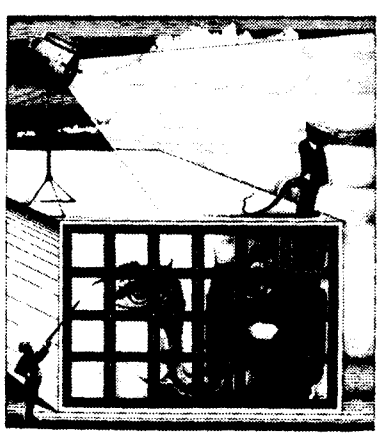
No differences were noted between the group that received job placement services in addition to aid from the one that didn't. Nor was the recidivism rate lowered in the non-subsidized groups by the availability of these services. Concluded Mallar and Thornton, "The provision of financial aid led to a large and statistically significant reduction in theft re-arrests, while the provision of job placement services proved to be singularly ineffective."

The change from incarceration, where life for the convict is slow-paced and routinized, to the high-charged bustle of American street life is drastic. The most ordinary transactions often are exceedingly difficult for the ex-con. "I hated prison. I mean I hated it so bad I used to choke myself to get to sleep. But I wasn't out five hours but I was so depressed I wanted to turn around and run back and bang for them to let me in them gates," a black first-time parolee told a Lincoln, Nebraska, social worker.

Like many ex-cons, particularly those sent up for theft, burglary, armed robbery and/or assault, the Nebraska parolee tried to solve his readjustment problems with the help of alcohol. He traded the shoes he'd been given upon his release for "a pint of vodka and some smelly old brogans" because he felt that people recognized the newer shoes as prison wear and were avoiding him because of them. He began to seek out other released felons because he felt more comfortable with them. Had not his parole officer intervened, he would have been sent back to prison after being picked up for disturbing the peace.

Counseling helped the parolee understand that his reactions were "normal." He managed to find a job, rent a room and gradually adjust to his new environment. "But," Jim Floyd of the State Law Enforcement Planning Agency of New Jersey warns, "unless counseling leads to the solution of immediate problems which have high priority for offenders, it is unlikely to have any impact on future criminal behavior."

Ex-offenders who come from broken homes, or backgrounds where violence is a part of everyday life, often find themselves at conflict with parole officers and social workers whose definition of "normal" is far different from



theirs. "Rehabilitation means to *restore* to useful, productive, and acceptable lives," criminology professor Mary G. Almore of the University of Texas at Arlington contends. "How many residents of our prisons ever led particularly useful, productive, and acceptable lives?" Where pre-prison life has consisted of ruleless behavior and a disregard for social and religious values, the felon lacks both patterns and peer group support. "Recividism among men who, as children, grew up in families where at least one other member was a convicted

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criminal is twelve times greater than it is for those who grew up in families with no criminal backgrounds," a report to the New Jersey Attorney General's office showed.

In most states, released felons must meet standards dictated by middle-class needs and customs. Another Nebraska ex-con—one who lasted only twenty months "on the outside" before being arrested and convicted for burglary and assault—recalled his troubled re-entry period.

"First, I wasn't 'sposed to associate with any felons. Hell, that cut out just about everybody I knew. So everytime I'm with a friend, I'm lookin' over my shoulder, scared I'm doin' something wrong. Then I'm 'sposed to hold a job. I worked two weeks and got laid off. Jobs, man, they don't grow on trees. I hardly could find work before I was sent up, much less after I got out. So I lie to my P.O. and then I'm scared he'll find out and he'll revoke my parole. Finally I just say 'to-hell-with-it,' and do like I always done. Them guys that make up rules, they never had to live where I do."

ROBERT TAGGART III maintains that the most effective rehabilitation for first- and second-time offenders involves pre-sentencing intervention. Under this type of program, which has been effectively tested in several states, post-prison employment is set up before the offender leaves the courtroom to begin his sentence. During incarceration, he follows vocational and study programs to prepare himself for the life he will lead when he is released.

Even with the help of such a program, or the support of social services like New Jersey's Community Readjustment Program, the released felon must get his life in order while facing a bewildering onslaught of needs and emergencies. Those who have a home to go to—a wife, parents, brother or sister, or other relative—temporarily solve the need for shelter. (Those who don't usually wind up in a skid row hotel, where the cash that they've received upon their release—usually about $60—lasts only a week or two.)

But not only has the felon changed during incarceration, his family has changed too. "Few marriages survive a prison term," a Texas social worker, Mike Flanagin, observes. While in prison, the offender has not had to cope with situations like those he confronts upon his return to society. In many instances, incarceration removes or relieves guilt. The first- or second-time offender often comes to view himself as "wronged," a member of the "better element" in prison life. Then, when he gets out, he can't handle his family's attitudes, and they can't handle his.

The inability to renew old relationships, particularly where wives or children are involved, proves to be catastrophic for some released prisoners. A Chicago parolee committed suicide nine days after his release from Joliet. Investigations revealed that he'd argued with his wife, who was pregnant with another man's child, and been kicked out of a temporary residence because he'd failed to pay the promised $15 rent. Floyd reports that many releasees drift back into crime "in order to get caught" and be reinstitutionalized. "Hell no, I don't like it here," a San Quentin resident told a prisoner's rights movement worker, "but I know what's expected of me. I can get along."

All prison sentences, Robert A. Fangmeier believes, are "life sentences." The problems of release are so immediate, and so complex, that few offenders forced to "make it on their own" without substantial support from family, social institutions, and friends escape recidivism. "Crime is easier than making it as an ex-criminal," a three-time loser was quoted in the *American Journal of Correction*. Transforming a rigidly routinized individual who virtually has been living in a state of suspended animation in prison into a self-sustaining member of society takes more than a pair of shoes, $60 in cash and a warning. "We have recidivists because we make no room for those released from prison in our society." former prison chaplain Father S. B. McGraw of San Francisco insists.

The price we pay, both as victims and as taxpayers, is far greater than an intelligent pre- and post-release rehabilitation program would cost.

Art

MAN/MADE ETERNITY

EDWARD HOPPER'S HEAVENLY CITY

BEFORE THE Museum of Modern Art owned a Picasso, it owned an Edward Hopper. In 1981 that seems particularly hard to justify, but the current Hopper retrospective at New York's Whitney Museum of American Art, which after a European tour will travel to Chicago and San Francisco, and Gail Levin's new *Edward Hopper: The Art and the Artist* (W.W. Norton, $35) go a long way towards explaining why Hopper has so successfully withstood this century's shifting tastes in art.

When we think of Edward Hopper, we tend to think of an artist whose major work represents the culmination of an "American realism" that has its origins in Robert Henri and the Ash Can school. In his vision of city life—specifically New York—Hopper seems as far from the landscape and genre painters of the nineteenth century as the abstract expressionists who came to rule American art while his career was still at its peak. The Hopper that Levin's book and the Whitney show reveal is, however, a man whose affinities with the urban artists of his time do not begin to explain his originality. George Bellows's lower East Side, John Sloan's crowded Fifth Avenue, Reginald Marsh's subway riders have no true equivalent in Hopper's work. He does not paint the city in order to capture its dynamism or express his sympathy for the poor. For Hopper, the city—minus a covert theology on his part—is what nature was to the landscape artists of the nineteenth century: a holy text. It is its stillness and harmonies that fascinate him, and in emphasizing the city's special light, its repeated geometric forms, its horizontality, Hopper seeks

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to capture the ways its man-made forms carry with them a permanence as significant as anything in nature.

For Hopper, this sense of the potential timelessness in the man-made is apparent even before we come to his urban masterpieces. We see it as early as 1929 in his famous *Railroad Sunset*. The painting itself is dominated by a sunset as awesome as that of Frederic Church's *Twilight in the Wilderness* of a century before, but what gives *Railroad Sunset* its unique power is the degree to which it builds on the compatibility of nature and the man-made. Cutting across Hopper's canvas and separating foreground from middleground are railroad tracks that by conventional logic ought to represent an intrusion on the scene. Yet the opposite is the case. The railroad tracks do not separate the natural from the unnatural nor isolate the sunset from the rest of the picture. Instead they emphasize the horizontal perspective that Hopper achieves with his red-streaked sunset and elongated clouds. The evening light glints off the steel rails with a brightness no natural object could convey, and the rails in turn allow Hopper to structure his painting in terms of receding horizontal bands. Take away the tracks, and we would still have a compelling landscape, but not a sunset that dominated foreground and middleground so completely nor a world in which the man-made had such visual power.

A year later in *Early Sunday Morning* we find these same stylistic principles at the center of Hopper's work; only now it is the urban that dominates nature. In *Early Sunday Morning*, originally titled *Seventh Avenue Shops*, a row of flat, two-story buildings with their evenly-spaced windows is all Hopper has given himself to work with, but here, too, less is more. In its concentrated modesty *Early Sunday Morning* is the quintessential Hopper cityscape. We are not cramped for space nor bored by the sameness of what we are shown. The strong horizontal lines of the buildings, the repetition of windows and storefronts moves the eye laterally across the picture, as Lloyd Goodrich, one of Hopper's earliest admirers, has pointed out; and because the buildings run to the edge of the canvas (are cropped rather than come to an end) our attention is drawn beyond the borders of the picture. What we are seeing, we are implicitly reminded, is part of a larger scene, part of a vast city. At this point it does not matter that the only signs of nature are a thin, blue horizon line and the bright, early morning sun. We do not need nature to redeem the stillness of this view of Seventh Avenue. More life—traffic, even a small crowd—would in fact violate the solidity and sense of proportion Hopper's starkness conveys.

All that is missing from *Early Sunday Morning* is an indication of whether these same aesthetic judgments could be made in the absence of any hint of nature. That is not, however, a question Hopper leaves in doubt, and in his 1942 masterpiece, *Nighthawks*, we see his urban aesthetic at its fullest. The subject of *Nighthawks*, an all-night diner in which a lone counterman and his three customers seem caught up in their separate worlds, is one that has prompted Hopper's critics to categorize him as an artist of the desolate. Yet when we look closely at *Nighthawks*, we find that neither Hopper's diner nor his nighthawks represents anything so morbid. Although the faces of the nighthawks are lacking in detail, they are by no means prototypes of the featureless mannequins of George Segal's *The Diner*. They have not been robbed of their identity by an oppressive city. The diner is a comforting source of light (we do not see a light bulb any more than we see the sun in a luminist painting), and in a darkened city, the diner provides room for contact without the requirements of intimacy. What the nighthawks have in common is ease with their surrounding. They show no signs of fear, and when we look more closely at *Nighthawks*, we see why. Order is everywhere. The enframing darkness that borders the pictures leads us to the windows that set off the interior space of the diner, and from there we move to the long triangular counter around which the diner's three customers sit. Nothing is out of place here, and when we follow the light from the diner back into the deserted streets, we see that, while the city it spills into is dark, it is not menacing. The sidewalks are free from litter, and the surrounding buildings (virtual duplicates of the stores in *Early Sunday Morning*) also convey a sense of order. Once again, it is solitude, not isolation, that Hopper evokes, and what is brought home is the permanence and symmetry that underlie his New York.

From the vantage point of 1981 this vision of New York is, it goes without saying, hard to accept. Hopper's affirmation of the city feels dated. We do not trust his argument from design. The lack of detail that so often characterizes his realism, his insistence on painting parts of the city in which the horizontal is more important than the vertical, his fondness for soft rather than harsh light run counter to our image of current New York

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and the complex view of the city the photo-realist painters of the last decade offer. History has been Hopper's enemy just as it was the enemy of the landscape artists of the nineteenth century, who did their best work at a time when the destruction of the American wilderness was beginning. Yet Hopper's urban classicism is no more to be dismissed than the pastoralism of a century before. Gail Levin is correct when she writes in her *Edward Hopper* that his paintings "do not intend to be just descriptive or topical, but aspire to the universal." For what Hopper's urban classicism embodies is not a sentimental aesthetic but a vision of the city in which order is a matter of clarity plus humanness of scale.

NICOLAUS MILLS

Screen

SHADOWBOXING

A FIGHTER'S STANCE TOWARD LIFE

The end of Martin Scorsese's *Raging Bull* is a continuation of the scene with which the film begins, one where the aging Jake La Motta (Robert De Niro) rehearses a nightclub act he does after retiring form the ring. The scene is like a variation on that old cliché of having the fighter's life pass before his eyes in flashback between the counts of nine and ten, and this isn't the only instance in which the film seems to rely on fight-film conventions. Scorsese and at least one of his scriptwriters, Paul Schrader, who also collaborated with him and De Niro on *Taxi Driver*, always work very much in the shadow of movie history. They're aware of the many ways that La Motta's story follows the standard plot line of boxing classics like *Body and Soul*. Like John Garfield in Robert Rossen's film, La Motta got mixed up with a dame and a gangster who both brought him grief. Scorsese's film even suggests that La Motta himself is aware of such parallels between his life and the fighters in movies. The material Jake rehearses in that opening and closing scene includes a monologue based on Brando's speech to his brother—"I coulda' been a contenda, Chahley"—in *On the Waterfront*. The dive that La Motta once had to take was also set up by his own brother.

What sets *Raging Bull* apart, however, is the way that Scorsese and Schrader play against the grain of these fight-film conventions which their own film invokes. Their film is the product of divided but not necessarily incompatible loyalties. As much as Scorsese loves to draw upon the fantasies of old movies, he also wants to be true to Jake La Motta's story and to the reality of working-class life in the Italian communities of New York where Scorsese himself grew up. In the movies, the hero of a fight film always has a character that develops slower than his body. But in the end, his character does develop. He changes dramatically. He grows up. He gets rid of the floozies and tells off the gangster. "Everybody dies," as John Garfield says to the fuming gangster for whom he has just refused to throw the title fight at the end of *Body and Soul*. The stoicism of this remark is a new-found wisdom for him, a radical transformation of his character.

Jake doesn't change. As Scorsese sees him, the key to his character is his obduracy. This is what made him both a great fighter and a rather tragic person. In one of the early scenes there is a moment when Jake asks his brother Joey (Joe Pesci) to hit him in the face, and then goads the brother until he does it, hard. Jake isn't content until he's got the angered Joey bombarding him with right crosses. In effect, Jake's stance as a fighter is his stance toward life. He moves in relentelessly in a low crouch, taking his beating, waiting for his chance to lash out at his opponent with his his trip-hammer barrage of lefts and rights. But as the film goes on, the opening that he's looking for, the chance to strike back and score the knockout he wants, occurs less and less.

Instead, the moments increase in which his explosions of rage have to alternate with the kind of impassivity he shows when he lets Joey beat on his face. In the fight where he takes a dive, the look of cocky defiance with which he provoked Joey turns to bored disdain for this palooka who can't hurt him even when he holds back. In the fight against Sugar Ray Robinson where he loses the middleweight title, Jake finally just stands against the ropes, defenseless, already beaten, and invites Robinson to K.O. him if he can (Robinson can't). In the Dade County jail, after it has taken two guards to throw him into a cell on charges of serving minors at his night club, Jake pounds his head and fists against the stone walls so ferociously we fear he's going to knock himself out.

Before even the opening scene where Jake is rehearsing his night-club act, we catch a glimpse of him in the ring, all alone, as he warms up before a fight by doing a little shadowboxing. At the end of the movie, when it's time for him to go on stage at the night club, he concludes the warm-up he's been doing this time with a little more shadowboxing in front of the dressing-room mirror. In between these two rounds of self-sparring, everything that usually happens to the hero in a fight film happens to Jake. He marries a hot tomato named Vickie (Cathie Moriarity), who drives him crazy and finally leaves him. ("Why don'cha bust her hole an' t'row her out?" Joey advises him. "She's ruinin' ya life.") Jake has to take that dive because no matter how many other contenders he beats, he can't get a title shot without doing the local don a favor. ("It's an embarrassment to me," the mobster explains to Joey. "I can't even deliver a boy from my own neighborhood.") Jake wins the title, and then loses it. He gets his own club in Miami and loses that too. He even loses the love and loyalty of his brother, and ends up a deadbeat comic in other people's sleazy clubs.

Yet while everything has changed for him, nothing has changed. That's the point of the opening and closing shots where he is shadowboxing with himself. It wasn't Vickie who ruined his life. She turned out to be a good wife and only left him after putting up with years of his suspicions that every-

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body from hoodlums to his own brother was sleeping with her. It wasn't Joey or the Mob that ruined Jake, either. After Jake threw that fight, he and Joey wept bitterly in the dressing room. He'd done such a lousy job of taking the dive that the boxing commission investigated him. But he still got his title shot as the gangsters promised, and he won and lost the championship with no fix in. No, the only fate Jake ever really has to struggle against is being Jake. It is his own intractability, his inability to change, to learn from life the way the clean-cut kid played by John Garfield does. That's what finally defeats Jake in the end. The truth is that he's spent his whole career boxing with shadows, faking himself out, throwing punches at his own paranoid delusions.

Because La Motta is seen this way by Scorsese, Schrader, and maybe even La Motta himself, whose memoir was the basis of the movie, *Raging Bull* ultimately becomes not an old-fashioned fight film, but a peculiarly modern story. It is the sort of flat, anti-dramatic, almost documentary narrative so typical of contemporary films and fiction. La Motta's story is appealing as a modern Everyman play because he did a kind of work which allowed him to act out, physically, the character he possessed. Perhaps the sheer physicality of La Motta's story was what prompted De Niro to portray him by putting on sixty pounds. Since his character was a given, a personality fully apparent from the first scene on, the increasing corpulence was at least a way to give visible form to the toll that character was taking. The weight De Niro put on acted out La Motta's fate in the same way that the scenes in the ring did.

Those fight scenes are the one place where Scorsese makes his own presence in La Motta's story felt. The fights are very stylized. They seem to be modeled on the sword fights in samurai movies, the slow-motion photography and special effects reducing the violence to the same sort of gory ritual it is in the Japanese films. There is even, when the flashbulbs go off on the press cameras, a dissonant sound like Japanese music on the otherwise silent track. Done thus, the fight scenes become a kind of dream sequence. We see that even here, at the height of the violence, La Motta was in the grip of an incredible self-involvement, boxing with shadows of his own creation.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

Books: TWO KINDS OF FAITH

THE LETTERS OF EVELYN WAUGH

Edited by Mark Amory
Ticknor & Fields, $25, 673 pp.

WAYS OF ESCAPE

Graham Greene
Simon & Schuster, $10.95, 256 pp.

Frank McConnell

TRUST the tale, not the teller: D. H. Lawrence's advice is probably the best we are likely to get about reading fiction. And like most good advice, it is almost impossible to follow. We all know that we should take novels for the independent works of art—well-wrought urns or verbal icons—they really are, and not as encoded confessions by their authors; and yet we keep wanting to hear news about what has moved the tellers of the tales that move us. Who—except a Frankenstein's monster of a graduate student—could buy James Joyce a drink and turn the conversation *away* from what *Ulysses* means? Indeed, who has read D., H. Lawrence's own novels and not tried to learn something of D. H. Lawrence's life?

It isn't, I think, that great writers suffer more greatly than the rest of us. The desert places of an Evelyn Waugh or a Graham Greene may, in fact, be less arid, less terrifying than yours or mine or those of the next person you share an elevator with. But if they don't suffer more, writers, we like to think, survive their suffering better than most of us do. Their writing itself is a certificate of their toughness, an "evidence," as the Methodists used to call it, of their special election.

Thus, when we open *The Letters of Evelyn Waugh* or *Ways of Escape*, Graham Greene's second volume of autobiography, we do so—like it and admit it or not—to ask questions we probably shouldn't ask: what are (or were) these men really like? how did their lives—as or more messy than most of ours—issue in stories, language, so much better than most of ours? what do they, about whom we think so seriously, finally think of themselves? We are not just readers, that is. We are accomplices in a more or less willing violation of privacy.

That "more or less" is important. Waugh was a great letter-writer, and like all great letter-writers must have kept an eye at least half-aslant to the eventual, posthumous publication of what he wrote. The very clever Mark Amory has selected 840 of those letters, claim the publishers, out of a possible 4,500; and the even cleverer Evelyn Waugh must have ensured, in the act of writing them, a number of selections made. Nevertheless, these are essentially private communications, full of warmth, the affection, and at times the bitterness and silliness of a man writing, however self-consciously, to a circle of friends. Since the publication of his *Diaries*, those *very* private communications, a few years ago, Waugh has enjoyed a dubious celebrity as a kind of sacred monster of selfishness and snobbery. The *Letters* should correct that misapprehension—at least for those who want it corrected. There are unfeeling letters to his second wife, Laura, and nasty letters about Jacques Barzun, Randolph Churchill, and others: Waugh was a good son of Adam and capable of pettiness. But there are also a host of loving, touching, and immensely

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human letters to Laura—and to Nancy Mitford, Sir John and Penelope Betjeman, Henry Green, and Graham Greene, to name only a few. He was not—perhaps could not find it in himself to be—a happy man. His sense of the absurd, and the precision of his talent for hatred, were too finely tuned for happiness. But happiness—as Greene suggests at the end of *The Ministry of Fear* and Waugh suggests at the end of *Brideshead Revisited*—may not be the point. Beyond it there can lie charity; in Waugh's case all the more valuable and real because so bitter, so difficult of attainment.

If Waugh's letters reveal, happily, resonances we had already suspected, Greene's autobiography happily revels in a reticence we have come to expect. Quite a bit of this book has already appeared, in the form of new prefaces to the *Collected Novels* of Greene now being published in England. And what is new here is more—beautifully—of the same. No writer, perhaps, has written an autobiography that reveals less of the man behind the works. *Ways of Escape* is the perfect title for this book, since it is not only "about" the ways of escape from the tedium of life that are Greene's collected novels, but *is*, itself, a way of escape from the responsibilities of self-revelation implied by writing an autobiography. Of course, from the man who called his previous autobiography *A Sort of Life*, and ended it with not his first significant success but his first significant failure, what else could we expect?

It's not that easy being Greene. That is the single clearest message of *Ways of Escape*, and probably of the novels as well. Much more intelligent, and one suspects a lot less cozy than Waugh, Graham Greene has spent literally a lifetime writing stories, visiting strange countries, and all the time looking for something or someone to bring the stories and the countries together in a reasonable simulacrum of order, grace, charity, or the peace of God. He hasn't found it yet: and if he hasn't, it is unlikely that anyone else has. But *Ways of Escape* is a fine record of his long, diffident search for that magic kingdom—and of its present inconclusiveness. The marvelous thing is that Greene remains, in the midst of the quest, a storyteller. His autobiography is much more story than it is autobiography, beginning with a disclaimer about all the proper names he is not empowered to mention and concluding with the possibility that, all along, he has been telling the story of a "Graham Greene" who is not the *real* "Graham Greene." *Ways of Escape*, indeed!

A curious fact about these two books is that their authors were so fond of one another. A number of Waugh's most serious and most affectionate letters are to Greene. And Greene, in his autobiography, devotes four pages to a very touching elegy for his dead friend Evelyn Waugh. Both men, of course, were for years the favored "Catholic authors" of a sect and an educational system eager to find instances of people who could hold religious belief in the twentieth century and still not be fools.

Fond as Greene and Waugh may have been of one another, however, the fascinating thing about the almost simultaneous publication of their two books is the way in which it underscores their *difference*.

Waugh, born 1903, was a Catholic convert who wrote novels. Greene, born 1904, is a novelist who converted to Catholicism. It may not sound like much of a difference, but it is.

The great crisis in Waugh's life was in 1929, when he was betrayed by his wife, Evelyn (Freudians may putter as they like about the similarity of names). Within the year he divorced his wife and converted to Roman Catholicism. And marital infidelity and Roman Catholic belief were to play a permanent, and nearly indissoluble, part in all of his fiction after that time—which is to say, almost all of his fiction. He did not marry again till 1937: within the church, this time, and therefore forever, according to his lights.

Waugh converted to escape a failed marriage: Greene converted to make one. Greene became a Catholic about the same time Waugh did, but in order to marry his wife. The marriage did not last, though—against all odds—the conversion did. Greene has said on a number of occasions, and repeats here, that he found himself convinced of the truth of the Catholic faith intellectually, though not emotionally. Nothing in this new book clarifies or expands upon that extraordinary observation: though Greene's comments upon the evolution of his fiction from melodrama through tragedy back through comedy to melodrama may have a lot, finally, to do with it. Nevertheless, Greene's conversion seems to have been a charter for wandering, for a kind of perpetual exile, just as Waugh's conversion was, one feels, the discovery of a way home.

This difference, at least, is caught in the very postmarks of the two men's lives. After the cataclysm of the Second World War, in which they both served with distinction, it was Waugh who more and more limited his field of endeavor, until finally he was firmly ensconced in Combe Florey House, making only occasional "raids" on London for genteel debauchery. While Greene has continued to wander, visiting future international trouble spots with nearly barometric accuracy, settling down nowhere, a man almost as restless and nervous as his prose.

Waugh, of course, we will always remember as a satirist. Long after even the faintest memory of educated, nihilistic England in the twenties has died out, *A Handful of Dust* and *Brideshead Revisited* will retain some of the flavor of that self-hating, gay generation. And Greene, I suppose, we will always think of as a "serious" writer: maybe, as the only authentic English existentialist. *The Power and the Glory*, *Brighton Rock*, and *The End of the Affair* preserve a special urgency, a special panic—the panic, say, of the thirties—regardless of the decade in which the novels themselves appeared.

But to say this much is to utter clichés and caricatures. What emerges from the *Letters* of Waugh and *Ways of Escape* by Greene is a curious fact. Waugh, the master of ridicule and of studied frivolity, seems the more serious, even the more solemn in his frantic espousal of Catholicism as the one sure thing in a world he otherwise loathes. And Greene, the man who sees more deeply into the hopelessness of the human condition, the better connoisseur of chaos, is perhaps also the writer better able to control his

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own sense of himself through a saving sense of irony. Waugh is a *solemn* Catholic: he is even capable of writing to John Betjeman that refusal to accept the doctrines of Rome is tantamount to self-damnation. Mr. Greene, one feels, is never capable of that particular kind of rigidity.

Or that particular kind of faith. For, finally, what emerges from these two books—these two particular violations of privacy, the one willed, the other half-willed—is a division between two kinds of faith, two senses of the peculiar relevance of moral concerns to the everyday business of living and the everyday business of storytelling. A fundamentalist preacher I once heard on the radio observed that all Christians are either Good Friday Christians or Easter Sunday Christians.

I doubt if my friend on the radio would allow either Graham Greene or Evelyn Waugh into his own special fold, or if they would consider joining it, given the choice. However that may be, the division makes sense. The satirist *can* be a satirist because of the firmness of his faith, and the tragedian *must* be a tragedian because of the insecurity of his own.

The great advantage of having these two important books published almost simultaneously is that it allows us to see again that both the tragic and the comic response are allowed within the dimensions of the Faith: and that neither is enough, and that either *can be* enough if only imagined strongly enough.

Prayer is the Holy Spirit

ZEN AND THE BIBLE:
A PRIEST'S EXPERIENCE

J. K. Kadowaki, S.J.

Routledge & Kegan Paul, $7.95, 180 pp.

Robert E. Kennedy

"NOTHING TOUCHES our hearts more than the words of someone who has actually experienced what he is talking about." These words of Father Kakichi Kadowaki, S.J. of Sophia University, Tokyo, apply to his entire book. Early in the book the reader is readily convinced that Kadowaki writes from personal experience. He quickly realizes too that the author is writing about prayer with the decisiveness of one who, according to his own description of the mystic or the enlightened one, has seen, has "passed the first barrier and . . . additional Koans," and has verified for himself that "all things have the same source."

The thrust of this book is neither history nor doctrine nor a comparative study of Zen and Christian theory. Instead, it is an examination of what Kadowaki learned from his dealings with both religions. Throughout the book the author oftentimes implies that his objective is to lead the serious reader to that state of mind and harmony in which he can "examine the place where (he) stands."

Throughout his book, Kadowaki focuses on some important similarities he notes between Christian and Zen methods of meditation. He explains that in their existential orientations both the Christian and the Zen practitioner experience that aspect of human reality which the Buddhist calls delusive passion and the Christian, the seven capital sins. He notes further that both religions claim these passions/sins to be the result of man's having alienated himself from his true source.

Even more significant, explains Kadowaki, is the structural resemblance of the way each devotee—whether Christain or Zen—emancipates himself from these passions. The Christian purifies himself through *metanoia*, a positive turning of his whole mind and body to God, his source. Likewise, the Zen practioner undergoes what he calls a *gedatsu*, an overthrowing of ignorance and a returning to his true source.

Following *metanoia/gedatsu*, the "newly-turned" devotee, states Kadowaki, perceives that he must return to his true self only to abandon it with all his strength. Though the expressions for this profound insight differ from one religion to the other, still, whether it be the "sell everything" of Christ or the "step forward from the top of a one-hundred foot pole" of a Buddhist teacher, the reality of the perception does not.

Having sold everything, the Christian understands that he cannot cling to any understanding or feeling or imaginative theory he might have of God. He eventually intuits that God is not an object opposite to him, and that, therefore, the Christian's prayer can no longer be speaking to God. He concludes that such "imaginative" meditations are for the most part shallow and contrived. Having discerned this, he discovers that prayer is the Holy Spirit speaking to the Father, and that he, the Christian, is one with the act. He senses that these prayerful yearnings do indeed originate in God who is the very center of the Christian's own being. Hence he experiences himself truly as son; he knows that his life and Christ's are, in the words of the Buddhist teacher, though "not the same [still] not separate."

It is at this point on his journey to self-realization, exclaims Kadowaki, that the Christian draws near to the Zen experience described in a famous Koan: A monk asked Joshu that if "all things come back to the one, where does the one return to?" Trying to help his students comprehend the notion of "distinction in equality" the Master Ōmori wrote:

> If we make all things coming back to one, the negative side, the dying the great death, then how about it if we call the one coming back to all things, the affirmative actualization of the Great Life? In all things coming back to one, there is a holding on whereby even real gold loses its color, and in the one coming back to all things, there is the affirmative meaning of letting go whereby even the pebbles sparkle.

Hereby the monk is led ultimately to experience that his life and the Buddha's—to the monk the Buddha is the absolute—are though "not the same [still] not separate."

It is when the Christian and the Zen practitioner reach that transcendence of self, known only to the wise, (that is, they know the place where they stand: though "not the same, [yet] not separate" from the Absolute) that they are led deeper into wisdom. For his part the

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Christian discerns that in submitting himself to the "awful" love of the Father, he becomes aware of a profound truth: the cross is the resurrection and the resurrection is the cross. Kadowaki intrudes at this solemn moment to qualify the new understanding of the Christian. "What directly connects these two (the cross and the resurrection) with 'is'," explains our author, "is neither the logic of theology nor an illusion created by emotional conjecture. What brings 'is' into being is the saving act of the Father and the Son. That 'is' of the cross is the resurrection, is the God/man Christ himself who died on the cross and rose again."

The Father, our author goes on to explain, who knew the deep-rootedness of man's sin, effectively smashed the wall between God and Man. The Father allowed His only Son to die and with Him all men so that they might be raised again to a new life. If we interpret the Father's intent in this manner, then we have no difficulty that the cross is the resurrection, and we even can see into the Zen Buddhist's mind-teasing phrase . . . "not the same and not separate." The cross indeed is not the same as the resurrection, yet it cannot be separated from the resurrection.

And for his part, the Zen practitioner faces the "awful" face of the Master Nansen who with a single stroke of a sword "eternally" destroys man's delusive passions by striking hard against all ludicrous arguments that portray the shallow and contrived nature of man. This killing sword is precisely the life-giving sword: it enables those who finally see wisdom die the Great Death and come to life again.

Many of the Koans nudge the human mind past human thought and understanding; hence they can be understood by the enlightened practitioners—those who have spent years in concentration and direction. It is Kadowaki's contention that the Bible contains divine mysteries and that it therefore can not be comprehended solely by the unenlightened reason and will. He suggests, consequently, that the Zen practice which is a prayer of the whole body and which surpasses the kind of meditation that Christians traditionally have practiced should be practiced by Christians who should make it part of their prayer life. The author concludes remarking that the Zen method of meditation could very well lead the Christian to that higher wisdom which the Church has always treasured—*Sophia*.

Zen and the Bible demands a great deal of the reader who will be richly rewarded by this experience. Like Kadowaki I do not recommend Zen for every Christian, nor for every Buddhist for that matter. I recommend it for those who are disposed to be permeated by the deepening silence of this austere but fruitful method.

Out of anger, out of hope

THE SHAPING OF AMERICA

A People's History of the Young Republic, Vol. III

Page Smith

McGraw Hill, $20, 870 pp.

A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

Howard Zinn

Harper & Row, $20, 610 pp.

David O'Brien

In her recent study of U.S. History textbooks, Frances Fitzgerald contrasts today's school history with that of our youth:

> The past is no highway to the present; it is a collection of issues and events that do not fit together and that lead in no single direction. The word 'progress' has been replaced by the word 'change': children, the modern texts insist, should learn history so that they can adapt to the rapid changes taking place around them. History is proceeding in spite of us.

This substitution of a therapy of adaptation for responsible politics as the outcome of historical study betrays the great tradition of U.S. historical writing. George Bancroft, Frederick Jackson Turner, Vernon Louis Parrington, Charles A. Beard, Carl Becker, all cared deeply about the fate of American democracy, each tried to see America whole, to find the key to the entire history of the nation in order to call the American people to action to redeem the promise of American life, a promise in which they all obviously, and passionately, believed.

Somewhere along the way of recent experience that tradition of historical memory as a basis of political and social action has given way to an agonized doubt that the world "out there," the American world, with its "problems" and "crises" is, after all, our world, for whose history and whose destiny we are in any way responsible. Radical education reformers like Jonathan Kozol and historians like Howard Zinn have spent lifetimes combating the attitude that "history always happens to somebody else, in some other time and some other place," an attitude that lies at the very heart of America's cultural and political paralysis. Their heroic struggle to make our history a shared human project has been overwhelmed by images of "change" and "adaptation" propagated by bureaucracies and their intellecutal hirelings.

Zinn and Page Smith believe that their colleagues among professional historians have contributed to this debasement of American historical scholarship. According to Smith, specialization, overemphasis on objectivity and a misplaced passion for the social sciences have all contributed to the absence of readable, meaningful general history by professional scholars, leaving a vacuum to be filled by propagandists and commercial interests. A decade ago Zinn was even more direct.

> For a long time, the historian has been embarrassed by his own humanity. Touched by the sight of poverty, horrified by war, revolted by racism, indignant at the strangling of dissent, he has nevertheless tried his best to keep his tie straight, his voice unruffled, and his emotions to himself. True, he

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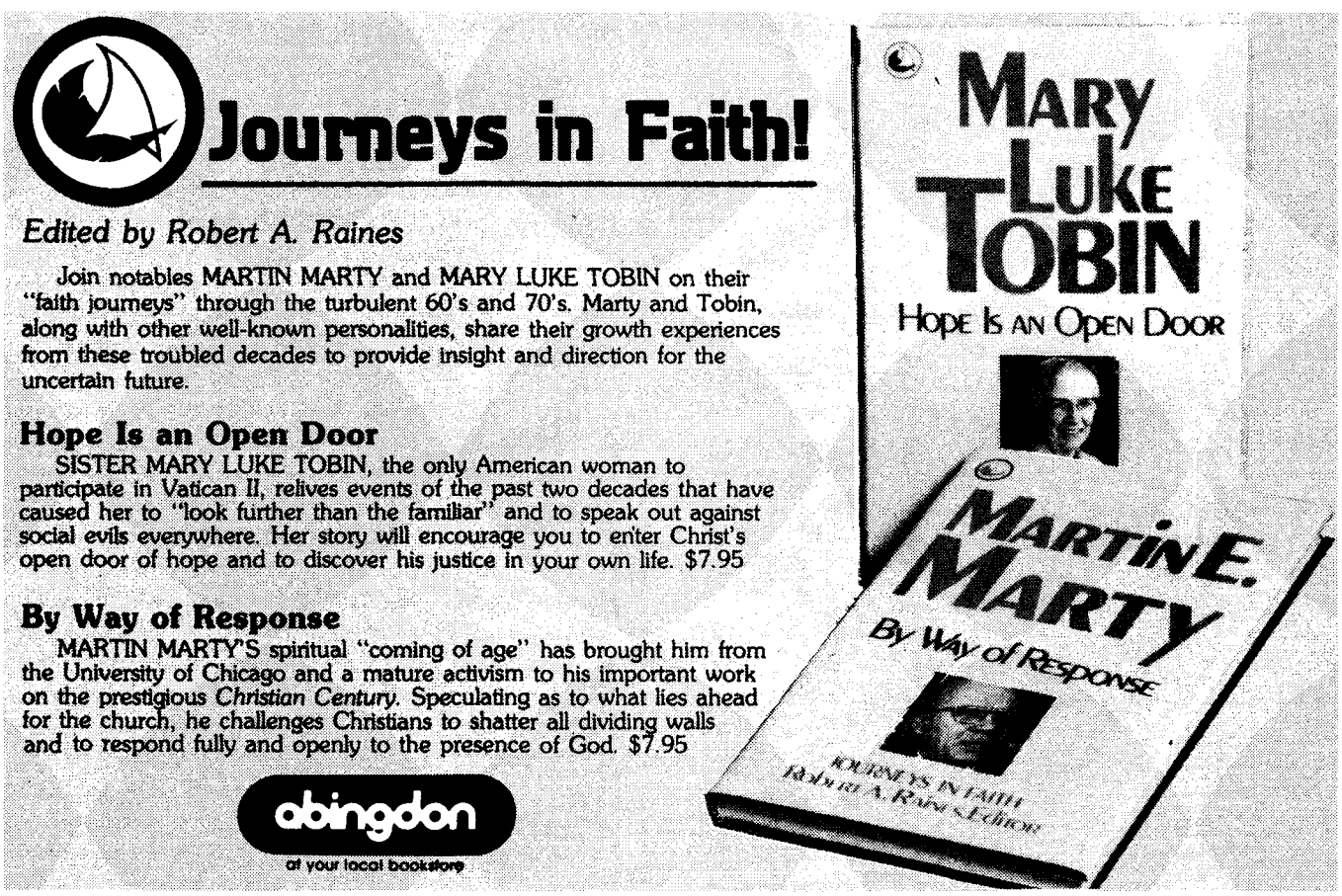
has often slyly attuned his research to his feelings, but so slyly, and with such scholarly skill, that only close friends and investigators for congressional committees might suspect him of compassion.

Everyone who has observed Zinn's long struggle for justice from a distance, and follows his current battle with Boston University President John Silber, knows that his tie is never straight, his voice is always ruffled, and he seldom keeps his emotions to himself. *A People's History of the United States* is a fitting expression of its author: committed, angry, one-sided, polemical, and profoundly true. It is history about the American people intended to be read by the people; they are its subjects, its heroes and heroines; their ultimate triumph will be its vindication. They struggle, yesterday and today, against leaders who, from the very start, have consistently proven unworthy: slaveholders and greedy merchants, industrialists and, yes university presidents, establishmentarians all, frightened by the disorder and violence which accompany the industrialization they have themselves unleashed, but can hardly control. Most of all, Zinn wants to communicate the suffering and the courage of history's victims. He writes of the revolution from the point of view of the soldiers, poor, hungry, cold, frightened, and later forgotten; of slavery from the point of view of the slaves, struggling against impossible odds to preserve their dignity and humanity in families, hating the system fastened upon them by greed and the corrupting power of racism; he describes the "intimate" oppression of women and the impersonal oppression of men and women who work in factories and live in slums; he tells of the wars of the twentieth century in terms of the soldiers once again; and he has the audacity to celebrate, in a history book about the United States, the victory of the people of Vietnam. Ever the heretic, Zinn dares to *imagine* (again, in a *history* book) that "history which keeps alive the memory of people's resistance" may preserve the possibility that someday the "guards" may join the "prisoners" in creating "a different and marvelous world."

Zinn is an intellectual, and he celebrates radical reformers from Paine to Garrison to Daniel Berrigan. Like them, he cares for the people, and knows their enemies even if sometimes they do not. More than that, he believes in the people and the eventual unification of their power to the truth. There is utopian anticipation throughout the book, a yearning for the moment when the truth will finally be clear, the leaders all exposed, the people fully empowered, and a new socialist community born in the liberation of the oppressed at home and abroad. Zinn's history is politicized history: it is designed to forward the work of liberation. It is also religious history, for it rests upon a deep faith that men and women are of ultimate worth; enabling all persons to take command of, and responsibility for, their history as the goal of all worthwhile intellectual endeavor.

Page Smith sets himself at once a less and more ambitious task. Equally committed to the redemption of the American promise, he is less directly political than


Journeys in Faith!
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Zinn, more inclined to "tell the story of our past as fairly and accurately as possible." Yet he admits to a pessimistic sense of decline, a fear that Americans are gradually becoming, may already be, what they once thought the English had become, "a reproach and byword among the nations." To make the people's history accessible, Smith hopes to write a multi-volume survey of popular experience, the first of this century. *The New Age Now Begins*, his two-volume history of the Revolution, was a bicentennial event written in the spirit of Jeremy Rifkin's Peoples Bicentennial Commission. Now he carries the story through the first quarter of the nineteenth century, a pace that allows for more leisurely, dispassionate reflection on the experience of the American people. Like Zinn, Smith sees the oppression, but he also sees, perhaps more clearly, the joy of freedom for so many and the power of the American dream of material advancement. The anger and bitterness of Zinn's radicals, the heroism of the oppressed, arose not out of some abstract rebellion against greed and tyranny but out of an always American rebellion against the dream deferred and betrayed. Hope for a better life, the revolutionary possibility of economic security, personal liberty, and popular self-government given form and concreteness in the United States Constitution, these promises and symbols transformed the whole universe of human expectation.

Revolutions are made from protest against injustice and affirmation of new possibilities, out of anger and out of hope; without the hope, and the faith on which it rests, the anger can become demonic. Similarly, a people's history of the United States which describes hurts and oppressions, and reminds us of heroic resistance and occasional rebellion, is a useful antidote to the complacent seamlessness of the establishment historiography which angers Frances FitzGerald. But it is not the full story of the American people, and not a full history *for* the American people. It risks distorting both past and future. It results in alienation, or an existential gesture, rather than in serious democratic and socialist politics. Smith's populism is a fuller and richer contribution to Zinn's longed-for day of liberation, because it reminds us that modern history, and the liberal credo which informed it, contains elements of permanent significance and undying value.

It is two centuries since Jefferson substituted "the pursuit of happiness" for Locke's protection of property. During those two centuries a lot of people worked very hard so that those who came later might be better and happier, and more than a few found in that hope the meaning of the pursuit. Our history should remind us not only of our responsibility for the promises betrayed by institutions and their leaders, but of promises vindicated in daily struggle by people like ourselves, promises of dignity and decency to be carried forward in our generation, made universal by our own history. If we dismantle as we must the machinery of our warfare state, we will do so not to end the American dream and inter the American promise, but precisely to help construct that "new order," to usher in that "new age," when all men and women will know the joy of freedom and share the tasks of self-government.

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Killing the pity in the heart

NEVER AGAIN WITHOUT A RIFLE:
The Origins of Italian Terrorism
Alessandro Silj
Karz Publishers, $11.95, 233 pp.

John Ahern

TERRORISM is hard to understand when your only information comes from television news and daily newspapers. The temptation is to dismiss it as inexplicable, lunatic violence, rather than to examine it as something new and strange. To do so, more information is needed. Three years ago Alessandro Silj tried to make sense out the terrorism that was beginning to fill the Italian press, and which was usually explained away by both the public and the journalists. After interviewing the family and friends of a few exemplary terrorists, he wrote a good, detailed book which was in press in the Spring of 1977 when Aldo Moro was shot, and the riots in Bologna ruined that city's image as the showplace of enlightened, reformist Communism. By the time the book appeared, the public realized that a new, mysterious and perhaps, at bottom, very simple phenomenon had come to disturb it. Just two years later, we are fortunate to have his book in English.

The first and strongest section narrates the transformation of a few high-minded young people into political terrorists in two small, quintessentially Italian cities: Catholic Trento in the Alps and Communist Reggio Emilia on the plains of the Po Valley. He traces the passage of Roberto Ognibene, a young, intelligent high school student who made his way from the traditional Communist Youth Organizations to the Red Brigades, only to be wounded in a shoot-out with the cops, one of whom he killed. Silj then

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follows the parallel journey of Margherita Cagol, a good, conservative girl from a strong Catholic family, an accomplished classical guitarist, a practicing Catholic who went out of her way to attend certain sermons because they "satisfied" her, and who ended gunned down by the police, in the belief she was fighting against capitalism at the side of her husband with whom she had founded the Red Brigades. Silj provides a penetrating, sympathetic portrait of her husband, Renato Curcio, the earnest son of a poor Waldensian mother, who left his studies in sociology at Trento to become an armed revolutionary, and is now in prison. What made sensitive, reflective persons, all from loving families, and who had grown up in the stable, prosperous Italy of the fifties and early sixties, choose terrorism as their only possible relation with the world? There are many injustices in Italian society, as any Italian will point out, and they appear to be increasing. Most can be laid at the door of the corrupt Christian Democrats who have ruled the country for the past thirty years. But the violence of the terrorist is perceived by most Italians as incommensurate with the government's violence, if only because it adds to existing violence, and allows the government to justify increasingly repressive behavior.

But why in all the centuries of grinding injustice has such a phenomenon never arisen before? The answer can be found in the changed intellectual climate of postwar Italy, where Marxism has established hegemony over the country's intellectual and cultural life. All of Silj's terrorists grew up with the idea that society can be changed, and when peaceful means fail (and they all tried them), violence is justified. Ognibene learned this at home in the usual Communist analyses of the conditions that lead to revolution. Curcio learned it at the University of Trento, where the Christian Democrats had established a university around a strong sociology department intended to provide social engineers for the new Italy of the 'economic miracle.' Italian Catholics and Communists blame this terrorism on one another, and they are both right, up to a point. Giorgio Amendola, the tough, heroic, narrow-minded Communist blames it all on the "exasperated populism" of Catholics who broke into his nice, tidy class struggle sometime in the late sixties with their "unhistorical" vision of history. And, in fact, the Vatican Council and Pope John's support of a Christian Democrat-Socialist alliance (which now looks like any other cynical, political expedient) introduced a whole generation of Italian Catholics to the idea that they bore some responsibility for implementing social justice in daily life. But members of Amendola's own party have observed that, reading about these terrorists, they have the feeling of flipping through a family album. The language, the ideas, the faces are all familiar.

Terrorists are hard to understand because, one suspects, in their ingenuity there is so much that they do not understand. They know the Marxist theory of work, but they do not work. Their lives of secrecy isolate them from other men. They do not understand that when they murder a middle-level manager of a Fiat plant, they have by that act cut themselves off from others. As they try to torture abstractions into reality, they find that they become obsessed with guns, bombs, clock-work efficiency, trust, betrayal, and the police. In the name of other men, whom they never consulted, they save society by 'destabilizing' it. The parallel with the CIA's logic, and hence that of our own government, is not fortuitous. They end by killing the pity in their hearts that first moved them to concern. They disdain charity, which Curcio defined as "the odious outstretched hand."

When you finish this book, you understand how intelligent and even noble people in Italy are led by the circumstances of their lives to choose violence as a means of regenerating society. The book, wisely, makes no attempt to illuminate the mystery of such a choice. Silj, an accomplished historian, is here strongest when he narrates, and weakest when he analyzes. He is caught in the reform/revolution dilemma that obsessed these terrorists in their early stages. The language of his analysis of their failure is dangerously close to the debased, turgid language of the Red Brigades themselves. The translation is usually a little less turgid than the original, but is frequently and perhaps unavoidably awkward.

A map to the infernal kingdom

BY WORDS ALONE
THE HOLOCAUST IN LITERATURE

Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi

University of Chicago, $15, 262 pp.

Alan Mintz

THE ABUNDANCE of novels, poems, and plays concerning the Holocaust that have appeared since the early 1960s has begun in the past few years to generate its own body of literary criticism. The imaginative literature of the Holocaust is extraordinarily varied, written in many languages, motivated by different mentalities and ideologies, achieved through a wide range of formal strategies. Yet critical writing on this literature has been both narrow and overgeneralized. Leaning heavily on several authors in one or two languages and at the same time compelled by their own search for identity, critics have often been led to make extravagant theological pronouncements based on a paucity of texts. Against this background, the appearance of Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi's book, *By Words Alone*, an attempt to see Holocaust literature whole, is a welcome event.

Ezrahi has worked hard in making

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basic distinctions and groupings in regard to subject and genre, and the result is a map of Holocaust literature which, though in need of testing and refinement, will help us to find our way in this most infernal of kingdoms.

Ezrahi's map is formulated in terms of a six-stage continuum that reaches from realism to myth. The first stage is the documentary art of the Holocaust, such works as Steiner's *Treblinka* and Hochhuth's *The Deputy*, which, though they may be novels or plays, achieve their effect by claiming to be defictionalized truths, mere reports with no invention. The second stage is "concentrationary realism," writing that in excluding both memory and hope, is entirely immersed in the realities of the Holocaust world. Tadeusz Borowski, the Polish author of a brilliant short-story collection, *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*, is the exemplar of a genre which represents the shattering submission of the self to the world of the camps and which forbids the least trace of transcendence through metaphor or rhetoric. In the next stage, the literature of survival, it is precisely the memories of ordinary scenes of prewar love and family that supply the strength to resist submission to the norms of the concentrationary universe. The authors are mostly women (Ilona Karmel, Anna Langfus, Zdena Berger); their works chronicle the struggle to maintain the integrity of the self in the camps and the survival and restoration of personal identity afterwards.

The Holocaust depicted as a Jewish tragedy is located at a stage on the continuum where personal identity is not isolated but linked to a collective vision. The Jewish writer who writes as a Jew is lodged in a tradition of lamentation literature for which the subject of national catastrophe is hardly new. The works of Weisel, André Schwarz-Bart, and Paul Celan, among others, take their meaning in a larger covenantal schema of the Jews and their relations with God. The fifth stage is the Holocaust reduced to myth. Here the particular horrors of the Holocaust as a historical event are absorbed into essential symbols of violence and death. The fiction of Jerzy Kosinski and Jakob Lind is marked by grotesque, apocalyptic images of evil and perversion, which Ezrahi calls "the pornography of death." The final stage involves the impact, slight though it is, of the Holocaust on American literature, in which the Holocaust, when it *is* addressed, must be gotten at through several removes of imagining.

Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi writes with authority and sensitivity about material that is too commonly treated with theatricality. Her chapters are full of well-reasoned discriminations on such issues as the difference between the Soviet penal system and the Holocaust, the definition of the survivor as hero or as victim, the ideological implications of various terms for the Holocaust. Although the main business of the book is classification, her occasional analyses of specific texts are always insightful and well handled. Her essays in literary evaluation are also worthwhile. We are indebted to Ezrahi for putting forward the claims of Borowski, Karmel, Langfus, Sperber, Celan, and others, and also for framing reservations concerning the achievements of Weisel, Schwarz-Bart, and Kosinski.

What problems there are in *By Words Alone* stem from the model itself, which like all models, is limited in its explanatory power. The model rests on the assumption that the literature of the Holocaust forms a unified "concentrationary idiom" which is marked by internal coherence and an interchangeability of languages. While this is a useful way of discussing some works, it simply doesn't work for many other works, which cannot be fully understood unless they are also considered within the context of their specific national literatures. Schwarz-Bart's *The Last of the Just*, for example, certainly owes as much to the passions and conventions of the French mind as to other Holocaust works considered as a separate genre. The model works best in the case of authors whose involvement in a national cultural milieu was marginal before the War. It works least well in the case of engaged Jews, whose writings are intelligible, by Ezrahi's own admission, only in terms of longstanding literary quarrels with God. This is all the more true in the case of the voluminous and important imaginative literature on the Holocaust written specifically in Hebrew and Yiddish, with which this book does not deal. (It apparently falls outside the scope of the book, but puzzlingly, this is never made clear.) The inconsistency of the long closing chapter, an excellent and searching piece of literary history that documents the failure of American writers to mount a substantive response to the Holocaust, also undercuts the validity of the model by demonstrating that the American scene demands to be understood on its own terms.

These reservations take little away from the value of this admirable book. *By Words Alone* embodies one way of reading Holocaust literature which will enrich and be enriched by other angles of vision.

REVIEWERS

FRANK McCONNELL, *author of* The Science Fiction of H.G. Wells *(Oxford), is working on a study of the fiction of Graham Greene.*

FATHER ROBERT E. KENNEDY, S.J., *teaches in the theology department of St. Peter's College, Jersey City.*

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ALAN MINTZ *teaches Hebrew Literature at Columbia University. He is the author of* George Eliot and the Novel of Vocation.

Correspondence

(Continued from page 2)

Misrepresentation

Greenwich, Conn.

To the Editors: I am shocked that your magazine should publish an article as clearly vicious and untrue as Ms. Mullarkey's "Icons of Vulgarity" in the August 1 issue. She, and your magazine, are obviously ignorant of the context. I am referring to the art world.

In addition to grossly distorting the works of a great artist, she goes out of her way to defame and discredit his character. I would like to know what authorizes Ms. Mullarkey to comment on Lester Johnson's personal life, politics,

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background, home, life-style and cost of his paintings. Where did she get her "facts"?

Johnson has suffered the flourishing and financial success of Pop Art, Op Art and Conceptualism, to mention a few. He has persevered with *art*. How can this person be considered an "opportunist" or a "careerist?" How has his "long-shot" paid off? By years of hard work and very little public recognition? By being excluded from all the major museums? Is that his pay? Where, exactly, is his commercialism?

It is particularly disturbing that Ms. Mullarkey barely discusses Johnson's work itself. She filled her article with strangely contradictory statements, at one point commenting on Johnson's "sense of movement," later calling the same figures an "invitation to voyeurism," the "knees on their way to the spectator's groin." Does this kind of defamatory speculation belong in your magazine? It is a pathetic analysis, or mis-analysis of the subject matter.

On several personal matters I must comment: "Johnson paints with none of Leger's proletarian sympathies"—how does she know? "Johnson is the bourgeoisie"—how does she know? "He produces two dozen paintings a year"—how does she know? He wants "lilacs/or young ass"—how does she know?

I suggest that the editor and Ms. Mullarkey do their research next time before they insult and misrepresent an artist.

LESLIE MARIA JOHNSON
(daughter of Lester Johnson)

The author replies

Yes, art exists in context. It exists in a peculiarly reflective relationship to the sensibility and personal history of its creator. It exists—is made and marketed—in relation to a consuming audience and to the taste of its time. The work of Lester Johnson seems to me to be particularly illustrative of that actuality.

"He has persevered with *art*." That was the whole point of my article.

I am at a loss to understand Ms. Johnson's claim that Johnson suffers neglect. His work is in the permanent collections of the most prestigious museums in the country, among them: the Guggenheim and the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Hirshhorn and the National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C.; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo; Guild Hall, Easthampton Newberger Museum.

His roster of significant shows is equally dazzling. To name only a few: "Art in America after World War II," Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1979; "100 Years-100 Artists," the Art Institute of Chicago's centennial exhibition, 1979; "Whitney Biennial," Whitney Museum of Contemporary American Art, 1973; "Seventieth American Exhibition," Art Institute of Chicago, 1972; "10 Independents," Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1972.

Museums are not in the business of discovering Lana Turners at the soda fountain. A track record as impressive as Johnson's requires, in addition to talent, the kind of footwork and adjustments that can comfortably be called careerism. The word in no way diminishes the achievement. It simply places it—that phrase again—in context.

The prices of Johnson's paintings are available to anyone who asks the Gimpel-Weitzenhoffer Gallery, his dealer in New York. Also available, in libraries and from the files of the gallery, are published articles and reviews containing such information as Johnson's annual output.

I looked at Johnson's work—as I look at all painting that engages me, with a full heart—and told what I found there. Ms. Johnson's real grievance is with the human fact that hearts are not always in accord. Yet I would think the daughter of a painter would understand that better than most. After all, it is the discordancies that make art—including the art of criticism—interesting.

MAUREEN MULLARKEY

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A worried thank you

Dear Readers,

Without the people whose names follow this letter, there would be no *Commonweal* today.

Without the addition of new names to that list, there will be no *Commonweal* in the future.

The facts are these: Magazines like *Commonweal* lose money. Some are supported by institutions. Others, *Commonweal* among them, are independent. They rely on devoted and generous contributors to make up the inevitable yearly deficit. In *Commonweal*'s case, that yearly deficit is relatively low—specifically, it ranges from $15,000 to $30,000. Similar journals run deficits ten and even twenty times that sum. But whatever the size, either the deficit is covered or the journal ceases to exist.

Commonweal's deficit has been no greater because we have kept our operating expenses to a barebones minimum. Perhaps too much so. We have underspent on promotional efforts, on salaries, on the size of our staff. In fact, we have had little choice in these matters. Yet the long-range health and effectiveness of *Commonweal* depends on our finding new readers, on our attracting and retaining staff members and writers with a rather unusual combination of broad intellectual interests, editorial talents, and religious concerns. At the same time, *Commonweal* confronts the sharply rising costs that everyone knows too well—and that have been particularly painful in the areas of printing and postage. As the editors prepared for the Christmas holiday, we learned that printing costs will jump by $11,000 next year. . . .

Loyalty has always been the key to *Commonweal*'s survival. The loyalty, first of all, of you, our readers, who among other things have given this magazine an extraordinarily high renewal rate. Loyalty, also, of writers who pass up more remunerative opportunities because they want to reach *these* readers. And the loyalty of a staff that excels despite conditions that would have warmed the heart of the unreformed Scrooge. Finally, the loyalty of the Commonweal Associates, whose aid has made the vital difference when the books have to be balanced. By their gifts the Associates have expressed in a very concrete and practical way what all of us feel—that *Commonweal* is not merely another publication among many, but one that offers a distinctive perspective on the world, one that has created for many a kind of sustaining intellectual and moral community. (One hardly need add, at the beginning of 1981, that this perspective is something of a besieged one—partly because many of other viewpoints have been willing to back *their* views with financial support.)

To these Commonweal Associates, the editors—and no doubt the readers and writers—of *Commonweal* would like to express our heartfelt thanks. We hope that many others among our readers will join their ranks—and in that way assure not only *Commonweal*'s continued existence but its growth and constant improvement as well. We ask you to fill out the coupon on the back cover.

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